

EARTH-MOVERS EXTRACTED FROM DEBRIS **INSIDE»**

EVMs REACH PANGI BY AIR **INSIDE»**

JANHVI KAPOOR LIVES IT UP AS A PUNJABI KUDI **INSIDE»**

MONDAY | 27 MAY 2024 | HIMACHAL

IN BRIEF

MAN OUT FISHING DROWNS IN TONS

Nahan: A 33-year-old man was swept away in Tons river, which flows along the Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand border. The deceased has been identified as Raghuveer, a resident of Kando village of Ronhat sub-tehsil. **P2**

HELPLINE

POLICE

Report corruption (WhatsApp) 8988700100
Report cyber crime - 1930
Gudiyah helpline (women safety)- 1515
Hoshiar Singh (Forest crime) - 1090

HEALTH

Medical emergency 108
Drug de-addiction, counselling and general health enquiry 104
Free drop back ambulance service for expectant mothers 102

2 tourists swept away in Beas near Manali

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KULLU, MAY 26

Two tourists were swept away by the gushing waters of the Beas at Nehru Kund near Manali today. As per information, after Ruchi Tiwari (22), who hailed from Rewa in Madhya Pradesh, fell into the river while clicking a photograph, Saurabh N Shah (33) from Putlibowdi of Hyderabad jumped to save her. While the police recovered Ruchi's body downstream at Bahang, there was no trace of Saurabh till the filing of this report.

Saurabh had come to Manali a few days ago and was planning to take a hotel on lease. Ruchi had reached Manali yesterday, with her two friends, one of whom knew Saurabh. All of them were staying in a hotel at Shanag village.

FATAL OUTING

During an outing today, Ruchi and her friends insisted on taking photographs near the Nehru Kund bridge.

As soon as Ruchi stepped on a stone to take a photo, she slipped and fell into the Beas. Saurabh jumped into the gushing waters to save her, but both were swept away in no time.

Meanwhile, Manali SDM Raman Sharma has appealed to tourism service providers to caution their guests against going near the river. He said police were also issuing advisories to tourists at many places. Area residents said the government and the administration should channelise rivers and develop spots where the tourists can enjoy without risking their lives.

Poor condition of roads big poll issue in Kasauli

Losing business despite paying GST in crores: Hoteliers

INDIA VOTES 2024

AMBIKA SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

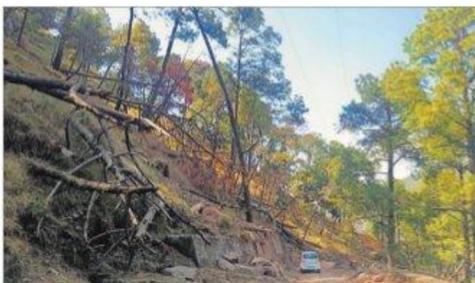
SOLAN, MAY 26

The poor condition of roads leading to Kasauli and Dagshai has emerged a key issue in the Lok Sabha elections. Local residents as well as tourists are talking about the poor roads.

Kasauli MLA Vinod Sultantpuri is the Congress nominee from the Shimla Lok Sabha seat.

Tourists travelling on the Sukki Jori-Sanawar-Kasauli road from the Parwanoo-Solan National Highway get a rude shock due to the deplorable condition of the main road that worsened after large-scale digging undertaken to lay pipes for a potable water scheme. Though some patch work was done, the road was not repaired properly. It requires a thorough overhaul as its culverts as well as the road surface had been damaged.

"Despite paying GST worth crores of rupees, the hoteliers in and around Kasauli are losing business due to the poor condition of roads. We have regularly appraised Public Works Department (PWD) of the matter and sought timely repair and maintenance, but a fund constraint is acting as a



The lack of repair has rendered the Dagshai-Kumarhatti road risky for the motorists. PHOTO BY WRITER

BUMPY RIDE FOR LOCALS

"Public representatives have failed to safeguard the interests of the local residents, who have to trudge potholed roads to reach their destinations in nearby villages." **-Ranjit, LOCAL RESIDENT**

deterrent for the repair work," rues Rocky Chimni, vice-president, Kasauli Residents and Hoteliers Welfare Association.

The Kimmughat-Chakki Ka Mor road, alongside which several hotels, homestays and bed and breakfast units are located, is among the worst roads. Beyond a few kilometres, it has not been tarred.

"Though this road was carved out to provide an arterial route to the Parwanoo-Dharampur road, the purpose has been defeated as most of it has not been metalled," says Chimni.

"It is pitiable that funds are spent sparingly on the upkeep of roads, which are the lifeline of the area. Locals

get employment as the hospitality industry has given a sizeable boost to the economy of the area," he adds. The PWD spends less than the required funds every year on the upkeep and maintenance of roads, he continued.

The condition of the Kumarhatti-Dharampur road is equally appalling as the defence authorities have not been able to undertake timely repair work. "Public representatives have failed to safeguard the interests of the residents who have to trudge the potholed road to reach their destinations in nearby villages such as Anji located in the precincts of Dagshai," rues Ranjit, a local resident.

At 30.6°, Shimla sizzles on hottest day of the season

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 26

Shimla recorded the season's highest maximum temperature at 30.6° Celsius today, as against 30° Celsius the capital town registered last Sunday.

The mercury is rising fast elsewhere in the state as well, with most places recording a maximum of five to six degrees above normal. At 44.4° Celsius, Una was hottest in the state, close to the record 45.2° Celsius it registered in May 2013.

Meanwhile, the weather department has issued a forecast for heatwave conditions at isolated places in Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kangra, Mandi, Sirmour, Solan and Una districts over the next 72 hours. "We can see a few places registering their highest temper-



SCORCHER OF SUNDAY

TOWN	TEMPERATURE
SHIMLA	30.6°
UNA	44.4°
BILASPUR	42.9°
HAMIRPUR	42.1°
KANGRA	40.2°
CHAMBA	39.9°
NAHAN	38.9°
SOLAN	37.2°

atures in view of the prevailing weather conditions," said Surender Paul, Director, Met Centre, Shimla.

As per the forecast, the weather will remain dry and hot till May 30. From May 31,

there's a likelihood of rain at isolated places in the state.

The rising mercury is likely to hamper the electioneering as well, which has peaked now with the arrival of top leaders.

Rohtang permits not easy to come by

ABHINAV VASHISHT

KULLU, MAY 26

The daily limit of 1,200 online permits for Rohtang Pass was exhausted in a matter of minutes on Sunday with no permit available for the next three days.

The Pass was thrown open to tourists on May 24 with a daily limit of 1,200 vehicles—800 petrol and 400 diesel ones. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) had capped the number of vehicles to the ecologically fragile region.

The permits can be obtained online in two time slots—at 10 am for 200 diesel and 400 petrol vehicles and at 4 pm for the remaining vehicles. One can apply for the permit for the next six days from the current



All permits till Wednesday exhausted on Sunday itself.

day. While the permit is valid for one day for a to-and-fro journey, only three permits can be obtained for one vehicle in a week. The permit for light motor vehicles and medium utility vehicles comes for Rs 550, while it is Rs 600 for heavy motor vehicles, including the

congestion charges of Rs 50 and Rs 100, respectively.

During the peak tourist season, it becomes a herculean task to get the permit as these are booked within minutes of being released online.

The permits till Wednesday were sold out on Sunday itself.

To get a permit, details of the tourists and the vehicle have to be provided. A valid ID proof of the tourists and driving licence details of the driver have to be uploaded. The vehicle should not be more than 10 year old and must have a valid Pollution Under Check (PUC) certificate.

Even those with the permit have to wait at Gulaba barrier for scrutiny. Incidents of fleeing the tourists by those having permits have become quite common. Due to these reasons, many visitors to Manali are deprived of visiting the world-famous tourist spot.

Tourism beneficiaries have urged the government to approach the NGT to raise the daily limit of vehicles to Rohtang Pass.

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BSc

PSYCHOLOGY

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(Various subjects)
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SCAN TO APPLY

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No headway on Manikaran garbage plant

Land identified, proposal sent to high-ups for approval in Feb 2023, but no progress so far

ABHINAV VASHISHT

KULLU, MAY 26

Over a year ago, a garbage treatment plant was proposed to be set up at Kasol for efficient disposal of the garbage of the area. However, the proposal seems to have been confined to paper as no progress has been made on the project so far.

Presently, garbage from the Manikaran valley is being sent to a treatment plant in Manali.

The Manali Municipal Council (MC) has, however, expressed its reluctance to accept the waste from areas outside the town, maintaining that the dumping yard at Rangri already has garbage beyond its capacity.

The MC has refused to accept waste from other areas from June 21.

The Rural Development Department had identified 2 bigha land near Kasol in Parbati valley for the garbage disposal plant, and the matter was sent to the Directorate for approval in February 2023, but no progress has been made thus far.



Garbage littered on the banks of Parbati river; and (below) residents digging a pit to dump wet waste in Manikaran valley. FILE PHOTOS

MARRING THE BEAUTY OF THE TOWN

“Various trekking routes in the valley are often littered with garbage. Our organisation launches cleanliness campaigns, but the government should take concrete measures to address the issue. The work on the waste disposal plant should be started at the earliest.”

— DR Suman, PRESIDENT, PARBATI VALLEY ADVENTURE TOUR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION

With the increase in tourist footfall in the valley over the years, managing garbage is becoming quite the task in the absence of a garbage

treatment plant. In 2018, the hotel association of the area and people of the valley had aired their concerns with the state government and

the administration regarding garbage disposal and other issues affecting the area. Dhiraaj, a local, said, “There is no dumping site anywhere

MANALI REFUSES TO COLLECT GARBAGE

- Presently, garbage from Manikaran valley is being sent to a treatment plant in Manali
- The Manali Municipal Council (MC) has, however, refused to accept waste from areas outside the town from June 21
- The Rural Development Department had identified 2 bigha land near Kasol in Parbati valley
- The proposal was sent to the Directorate for approval in February 2023, but no progress has been made thus far

forests along roads and river banks and towards Kheerganga, he added.

DR Suman, president, Parbati Valley Adventure Tour Operators Association, said, “Various trekking routes in the valley are often littered with garbage. Our organisation launches cleanliness campaigns, but the government should take concrete measures to address the issue. The work on the waste disposal plant should be started at the earliest.”

The civic bodies of Kullu, Bhuntar, Manikaran and Banjar have been looking to set up garbage treatment plants in their respective areas for the past over five years after waste dumping at the waste incinerator plant in Pirdi was stopped in January 2019 on the orders of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and further directions of the Supreme Court.

Though some places were shortlisted by the administration and urban local bodies for the purpose, local panchayats had objected to setting up of the garbage treatment plants in these areas.



Officials and locals during the search operation.

Man out fishing drowns in Tons

NAHAN, MAY 26

A 33-year-old man was today swept away by the powerful currents of the Tons river, which flows along the state's border with Uttarakhand. The deceased has been identified as Raghuvir (33), a resident of Kando (Dharwa) village of sub-tehsil Ronhat.

According to local sources, Raghuvir was fishing near Tileni in Dharwa gram panchayat when he accidentally slipped into the Tons river and was caught in the river's strong currents. Despite immediate efforts by local villagers to rescue him, they were unable to locate him. Upon receiving the distress

call, the local police and the administration promptly arrived at the scene. A joint search and rescue operation was launched, involving both the administrative team and local villagers. After several hours of exhaustive effort, Raghuvir's body was recovered from the river late in the evening.

The police have taken possession of the body and preliminary investigations suggest that the drowning was accidental. In response to the incident, the local administration has provided immediate financial relief of Rs 25,000 to the family of the deceased. — OC

Earth-movers extracted from debris

RAJIV MAHAJAN

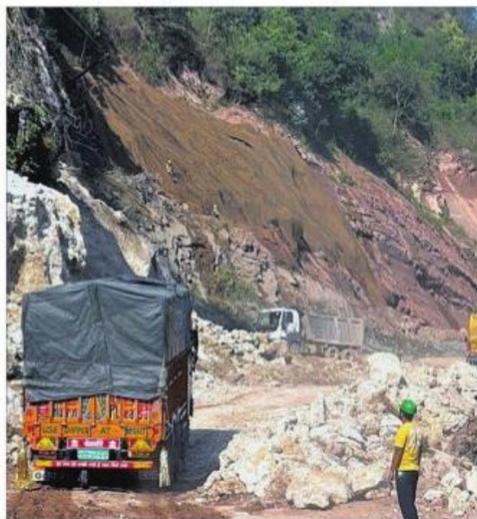
NURPUR, MAY 26

Traffic on the Kotla to Batees Meel stretch of the Pathankot-Mandi National Highway (NH)-154 was partially restored this evening after the debris of a massive landslide was cleared here. The landslide occurred last morning at Trilokpur near Kotla in the Jawali subdivision of Kangra district. The poclain machines (excavators) buried under the debris were extracted by the highway widening project construction company last evening.

Light vehicles were diverted to the Pathankot-Mandi NH stretch through Kotla-Soldha-Batees Meel single link road 10 days ago due to the ongoing roadside hill cutting work.

The narrow link road has added to the woes of com-

NH partially opens for heavy vehicles



A portion of the Pathankot-Mandi National Highway opened for heavy vehicles on Sunday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

muters — including tourists — travelling in private vehicles, who were no stranger to frequent traffic jams on this stretch in the scorching heat.

According to Rohit Sharma, local in-charge of Bharat Construction Company, the firm engaged by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) for the Pathankot-Mandi NH widening project, a high-capacity crane was pressed into service to extract the buried poclain machines. It took them four hours to pull out the machines, he added. He said the debris that slid down onto the highway was also removed for restoring traffic for heavy vehicles this evening.

Trilokpur residents have been up in arms against the highway widening project construction company, NHAI authorities responsible for the construction and the dis-

trict administration.

Their demand to ensure that safety measures were undertaken before massive mountain cutting was ignored and, now, the alleged unscientific cutting had started triggering landslides, the villagers claimed. According to the panic-ridden residents of the area, massive landslides were likely to be triggered during the monsoons, and could prove disastrous to the existence of their village.

Trilokpur gram panchayat pradhan Durga Dass, who has been reaching out to the government and NHAI authorities for the past year calling for action in this regard, has appealed to the High Court to take cognisance of the threat being faced by the residents of the Trilokpur village.

Sub Lt Sonakshi makes Nurpur proud

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NURPUR, MAY 26

A third-generation officer in the Armed Forces, Sub Lieutenant Sonakshi (22) of Hatli-Jawalana village of Nurpur passed out from the Officers' Training Naval Academy, Ezhimala, in Kerala on Saturday.

The passing-out parade was presided over by Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhary. After undergoing an 11-month intensive training at the Naval Academy, Sonakshi was commissioned as a Sub Lieutenant in technical Air Traffic Control.

Her father, after serving in the Army Intelligence for thirty years, retired as Captain in 2021. Her grandfather Bakil Singh (84) also served the Indian Army in the 7-Dogra Regiment, retiring as Naik in 1984.

The 22-year-old, who did her schooling at Army



Sub Lt Sonakshi with her parents after the passing-out parade.

School, Pathankot, is a state-level basketball player. Her father, Captain Gurwant Singh (retd), said she had completed a B.Tech course in Computer Science Engineering from Punjabi University, Patiala (2019-23).

“Hailing from a family of Armed Forces personnel, she was keen to join the Indian Naval Service, for which she was selected to undergo training at the Naval Academy in Ezhimala, Kerala,” he added.

WHAT OUR READERS SAY

Is a civic issue bothering you? Are you agitated over the lack of concern? Is there something heartening that you feel needs to be highlighted? Or a picture which in your opinion ought to be seen by many, and not just you?

The Tribune

invites its readers to have their say. Please email at: lpreadersfeedback@tribunemail.com

PINE TREES FALLING, VILLAGERS LIVE IN FEAR

LARGE pine trees behind houses in Brar village of Anni have become a major threat to the people living here. The threat of trees falling on the houses looms over the area residents. Recently, a storm caused many trees to fall in the area, leading to several houses getting damaged. The authorities concerned should take cognisance of this matter in the interest of the villagers. AIRUDH, ANNI (KULLU)

ERRATIC WATER SUPPLY IN SHIMLA

ERRATIC drinking water supply has become a huge problem for the people of Shimla. We have no choice but to purchase bottles of drinking water from shops to meet our daily needs. Not only is this rampant use of plastic bottles harming the environment, it is also making a dent in our pockets! The authorities concerned should come up with an effective plan to solve the water crisis. SAMRITI, SHIMLA

COLLEGE'S CONSTRUCTION AT SNAIL'S PACE

THE construction of a building of the government college in Gadagushaini (Banjar subdivision), which was started in 2018, is progressing at a snail's pace. Since 2014, classes have been conducted in a temporary tin structure, which is not in a good condition. Hundreds of students from Banjar and Seraj are enrolled in this college. The work on the building should be expedited as the students are facing difficulties. NIRMAL, GADAGUSHAINI (KULLU)

To meet demand, more Kullu-Delhi flights sought

‘Seats in flight available after a week, situation will worsen during tourist season’

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KULLU, MAY 26

The beneficiaries of the tourism industry have urged the Central Government-owned Alliance Air, the sole airline operating here, to operate additional flights on the Kullu-Chandigarh-Delhi route.

Arvind Sharma, a retired insurance lawyer, often travels between Kullu and Delhi. “It would be helpful if there were more flights available,” says Sharma. “Also, the fares would go down.”

Bhupender Thakur, patron

of the Kullu Travel Agents Association, says, “Seats in the Kullu-Delhi flight are available after about one week. The situation will worsen after the tourist footfall increases during the peak season. The airline should start additional daily flights with a stopover in Chandigarh using the same aircraft that is operating flights between Delhi, Kullu and Amritsar every day.”

Travel agent Vikrant says that the airline should start additional flights considering the demand, and the same flight can run at least twice a

day. He adds that having an additional flight would increase the availability of tickets for commuters and lead to better fares. Kullu-Manali Airport Advisory Committee member Budhi Prakash Thakur, says, “The matter of the extension of the runway at the Bhuntar airport has been hanging fire for the past over two decades. Most airlines do not have infrastructure to operate small planes and bigger planes will be able to operate here after the runway is expanded, which will encourage other airlines to operate flights to Kullu.”

Many surveys have been conducted for the expansion of the airport's runway but they have remained only on paper. Senior officials of the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation, teams of the Airport Authority of India (AAI) and experts from IIT-Roorkee had carried out surveys to explore the possibility of the extension of the runway at the Bhuntar airport. AAI officials had earlier stated that the government would have to acquire land for the runway expansion as the airport authorities do not bear the land acquisition cost.

‘Corporate-friendly’ BJP diluting environmental laws: NGO

MANDI, MAY 26

Guman Singh, convener of NGO Himalayan Niti Abhiyan, has launched a scathing attack on the Central Government, alleging that environmental laws had been significantly diluted under the BJP regime.

Guman Singh said a draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification issued by the Central Government in March 2020, and faced widespread backlash for its provisions allowing projects to proceed without prior environmental clearances, and for weakening other safeguards. Although the draft EIA has not been formally enacted, the Environment Ministry has issued office orders that mirror

its controversial provisions, he added. “The BJP, in its manifestos, pledged to expedite the process of granting environmental clearances for industrial and infrastructural projects. Data reveals a stark increase in clearances for wildlife, forest, environment and coastal zone projects between 2018 and 2022, surging from 577 to 12,496. Furthermore, the average time for securing environmental clearance has decreased from 600 days (pre-2014) to 162 days in 2017,” he said. “One of the BJP's key promises in its 2014 manifesto was the interlinking of rivers, yet the implementation has been sluggish. While 30 link projects have been identified



Guman Singh addresses mediapersons in Mandi on Sunday.

since then, only one — the Ken-Betwa Link Project in Madhya Pradesh — has seen progress. However, the project threatens to submerge vast swathes of land, including critical habitats like the Panna Tiger Reserve.

“In a significant move, the

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued new Forest Conservation Rules (FCR) in June 2022, replacing the previous regulations from 2009. The latest notification has drawn criticism for altering the compliance requirements

under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), potentially marginalising forest dwellers and indigenous communities,” he said.

“Additionally, concerns have been raised over the recent Green Credit Rules issued by the Centre in February 2024. These rules introduce a methodology for calculating green credits, allowing for their exchange to meet compensatory afforestation requirements. However, this initiative has sparked apprehension, with some viewing it as a guise for promoting green cover expansion while disregarding local concerns and environmental impacts,” he added.

Singh said there was an urgent need to protect the

Himalayan region by disapproving mega hydropower projects. There was a need to decentralise tourism. BJP is a corporate-friendly party that allocated projects to companies who donated to it through electoral bonds, he added. One such case came into notice near Palampur, where a pen stock of a hydel power project burst recently, causing losses to residents. This incident occurred due to substandard work of company, he said. “Today we need politicians who express their dedication and concern to save the environment. However, unfortunately, no politician is talking about this issue,” said Singh. — TNS

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Centre did help, gave ₹1,600 cr after rain disaster, says BJP MLA

Cong leader Kaul Singh indulging in 'deceitful politics': Anil Sharma

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MANDI, MAY 26
BJP MLA Anil Sharma has accused senior Congress leader Kaul Singh Thakur of "deceitful politics". Addressing the media here today, Sharma, who represents Mandi Sadar, said Thakur had "a tendency to twist facts and confuse the public, which led to his defeat in the Assembly elections in 2022". Sharma said despite Thakur's accusations of insufficient aid from the Centre to the state government, data available online revealed substantial assistance to Himachal Pradesh during times of disaster, amounting to approximately Rs 1,600 crore. He detailed specific allocations, including funds released by various Union Ministers for road maintenance and



MLA Anil Sharma addresses a press conference in Mandi on Sunday. TRIBUNE PHOTO: JAI KUMAR

bridge construction. Further, Sharma condemned what he described "misappropriation of disaster relief funds", pointing to instances where individuals unrelated to the disaster received financial aid. He warned of potential investigation into such practices if the NDA government was re-elected, suggesting a lack of

accountability in the distribution of relief funds. Sharma also criticised the state government's inability to get its due share of the BEMB from the Punjab Government despite court orders. He highlighted stalled infrastructure projects in Mandi. He accused the Congress candidate from the Mandi parliamentary seat, PWD Minister

Vikramaditya Singh, of instigating rebellion within the Congress party and questioned his vision for the region. Sharma alleged that Vikramaditya and his mother, sitting Congress MP from Mandi Pratibha Singh, had provoked the six Congress MLAs to rebel against the state government and later these six Congress MLAs were finally disqualified by the Assembly Speaker from the Vidhan Sabha. In response to Kaul Singh Thakur's allegations, Sharma defended Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asserting that the state government's economic package of Rs 4,500 crore was made possible only through the Central assistance. He further challenged Kaul Singh to substantiate his claims and proposed the scrutiny of relief fund distribution.

'At Nahan rally, Rahul tried to ape PM Modi but failed'

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 26
Former Urban Development Minister and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Suresh Bhardwaj today hit out at Indian National Congress (INC) leader and MP Rahul Gandhi for holding a rally in Nahan. He said the reaction of people to Rahul Gandhi's rally clearly depicts that people will not vote the Congress to power. While addressing the media-persons during a press conference, he said Rahul Gandhi tried to copy Prime Minister Narendra Modi by choosing Nahan for his rally. "Rahul Gandhi did not mention the achievements of the Congress governments during his speech, rather he only focused on personal attacks and statements against the PM," he said. He also lashed out at Gandhi for calling the media a sell-out, adding that Rahul



Suresh Bhardwaj addresses media in Shimla on Sunday.

abused the media, the fourth pillar of democracy, which was very unfortunate. "Former PM Indira Gandhi had hurt the dignity of democracy as well as the Constitution by forcibly imposing Emergency in the country to save her government and today her grandson is abusing the media, making it an old habit of the Gandhi family," said Bhardwaj. Taking a jibe at the Congress over imposing import

duties on apples, Bhardwaj said the Congress party leaders were repeatedly making statements on the issue of import duty, but they forgot that the agreement for this import duty was signed by their Lok Sabha candidate of the then Congress government, Anand Sharma. He said people's faith in PM Modi had become stronger and they were going to vote in the name of "development".

'BJP issueless, seeking votes in Modi's name'

NURPUR, MAY 26

Congress Seva Dal national president Lalji Desai said the BJP, which claimed to be the largest political party of the world, had become "issueless" in the Lok Sabha elections. It was begging for votes in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and on communal lines, Desai said while addressing the media here today. "BJP leaders are not talking about burning issues like poverty, unemployment, education, health and inflation," he said. Desai added that unemployment had increased manifold in past 10 years and people were reeling under the increased inflation. He said the Modi-led government had thrown the country into the furnace of privatisation only with the intention of providing financial benefits to a few of influential business houses. "The Constitution is being tampered with and BJP is fighting the election with the intention of changing the Constitution," he said. — OC

To reach Pangni, EVMs get comfort of air travel

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHAMBA, MAY 26
With the polling for General Elections slated on June 1 in Himachal Pradesh, the Chamba election authorities yesterday airlifted the electronic voting machines (EVMs) to Pangni, the landlocked valley in the northernmost part of the state. Pangni, which is currently accessible through Jammu and Kashmir or Lahaul and Spiti, falls under the Bharmour Assembly segment, which is part of the Mandi parliamentary constituency. Chamba Deputy Commissioner and District Electoral Officer Mukesh Repaswal said commissioning process for these machines had been completed in Bharmour prior to their dispatch. He said Pangni has a total of 39 polling stations and to accommodate these, 55 EVMs were safely delivered by a helicopter. Additionally, 16 extra machines were sent to ensure smooth election operations



The EVMs and VVPAT machines were airlifted to Killar, the headquarters of tribal Pangni valley, in Indian Air Force's Mi 17 helicopter.

across the 39 polling stations in the subdivision. An equal number of Ballot Units (BU), Control Units (CU) and VVPAT units were also dispatched. The transportation process involved moving the EVMs by road from the strongroom in Bharmour to the Sultanpur

Helipad situated at the district headquarters in Chamba. The machines were airlifted to the subdivision headquarters in Killar (Pangni). Repaswal said the EVMs have been safely placed in the strongroom at Tehsildar's office in Killar. The Pangni valley is spread

across 1,595 km, and has 55 villages under 19 panchayats. It is accessible through more than 600-km route via Lahaul and Spiti from the district headquarters in Chamba. The second route via Jammu and Kashmir is about 700-km. The third route from Cham-

- 19 PANCHAYATS**
- Pangni falls under the Bharmour Assembly segment which is part of the Mandi parliamentary constituency. The valley is spread across 1,595 km, and has 55 villages under 19 panchayats
 - It is accessible through more than 600-km route via Lahaul and Spiti from the district headquarters in Chamba
 - The second route via Jammu and Kashmir is about 700-km
 - The third route from Chamba to Killar via 4,500-m high Sach Pass is currently impassable due to snow
 - Before 1966, Pangni was a separate constituency but was merged in Bharmour after the delimitation process, leaving people of Pangni politically alienated

ba to Killar via 4,500-m high Sach Pass is currently impassable due to snow and the restoration work is underway. Before 1966, Pangni was a separate constituency but was merged in Bharmour after the delimitation process, leaving people of Pangni politically alienated.

Chandigarh man arrested for drug peddling in Solan

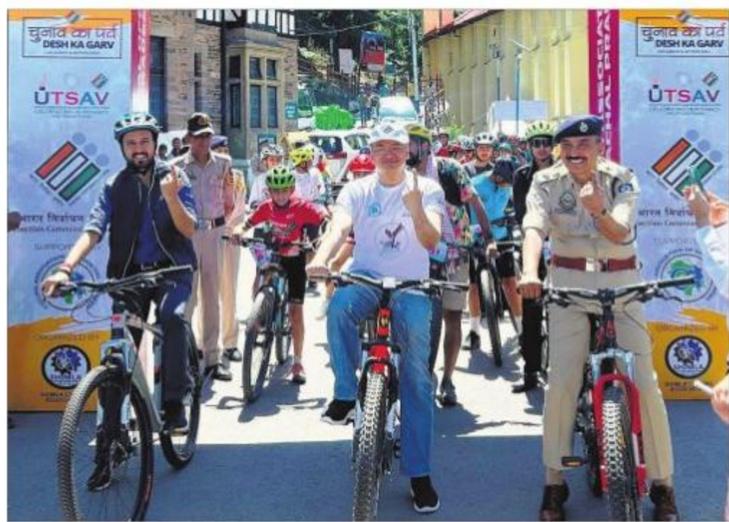
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SOLAN, MAY 26
The police yesterday arrested Dishant Garg, a Chandigarh resident, for allegedly supplying heroin in Solan district. The arrest came as the police were tracking links in connection with a drug peddling case. On March 12, Rajat Sharma and Abhishek, residents of Solan district, were arrested by the Dharampur police for possessing 9.29-gm heroin. Following their interrogation, Kapil Dev, son of Uday Bhan, a resident of Chandigarh, was arrested by the Dharampur police. Kapil Dev, along with his sons Dishant Garg and Praveen Garg, was found operating a drug racket for the past five years. Dishant, a co-accused in the case, was absconding since then, said Solan SP Gaurav Singh.

During investigation, it came to light that Kapil and Dishant were operating a network of heroin supply to various areas of Himachal Pradesh. It was found that in another FIR registered at Parwanoo, two persons — Kunal and Prakash Chand — were arrested with 6.21-gm heroin. Tracking the backward linkages of the case, the police arrested Amritpal Singh with 5.2-gm heroin from a hotel at Khajeri village in Chandigarh. The hotel belonged to Kapil Dev. "The father-son duo, Kapil Dev and Dishant, was running a drug racket from the hotel and Amritpal Singh worked for them. Dishant's brother Praveen was arrested by Parwanoo police for concealing the former's whereabouts and also for drug peddling under Section 212 of the Indian Penal Code and

Section 21,29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act," Singh added. Though the duo were granted interim bail by the High Court in this matter, they continue to run the drug racket. The heroin recovered on March 12 was also supplied by Dishant Garg and Kapil Dev. It was also found that a youth in Jutogh in Shimla district had died of heroin overdose brought from the same hotel. The Shimla police had also registered an FIR at Boileauganj police station in this regard. Dishant has two cases under the NDPS Act registered against him in Parwanoo and Chandigarh, in which a total of 300-gm heroin was recovered. The accused was produced before a court today, which sent him in three-day police remand.

Cyclists, children, officials 'Pedal for Democracy'



CEO Maneesh Garg and other officials at the cycling rally in Shimla on Sunday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 26
To motivate the voters to come out in large numbers for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the State Election Commission in association with the Cycling Association of Himachal Pradesh organised cycle rallies — "Pedal for Democracy" — across the state, in which around 2,000 cyclists of all age groups participated. The rallies were flagged off by the Deputy Commissioners in their respective districts. Chief Electoral Officer Maneesh Garg, who was the chief guest on the occasion, also cycled along with other officials, including Shimla Superintendent of Police

Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi. The CEO said, "Democracy thrives on the active involvement of its citizens. Each vote is a voice and it is imperative that we amplify these voices by ensuring maximum participation in the electoral process. The event serves as a reminder of our collective responsibility to uphold the principles of democracy and contribute to the nation-building process." "As the Lok Sabha elections are scheduled to be held on June 1, it is the moral duty of every citizen to ensure their participation in this Festival of Democracy," said Garg. He added that Himachal Pradesh had always recorded an increase in the voter turnout and people of the

state, especially in rural areas, showed a lot of enthusiasm and zeal for voting. In the last Assembly elections, the state recorded a 76 per cent voter turnout and this time again, the target was to surpass the earlier statistics, he added. The CEO also awarded prizes to the winners of various competitions. Cycling Association of Himachal Pradesh secretary Mohit Sood said, "Through this programme we seek to promote the values of active citizenship and civic engagement. By taking to the streets on our bicycles, we are demonstrating our commitment to shaping the future of our nation through democratic participation."



Participants at the Cyclothon in Dharamsala on Sunday.

Dharamsala urged to vote

DHARAMSALA, MAY 26
To make the common people aware of the importance of voting and motivate them to vote, the Kangra district administration organised a Cyclothon. Sharing this information, Deputy Commissioner Hemraj Bairwa said the Cyclothon was being organised under

the "SVEEP". Deputy Commissioner Hemraj Bairwa said various awareness programmes are being organised in the district to increase the vote percentage in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Kangra ADC, SP and IG North Zone also participated in this unique initiative. — OC

50 girls among 180 cycling enthusiasts rock Sirmaur

NAHAN, MAY 26
In a vibrant effort to boost voter awareness and participation, Assistant Election Officer and SDM Gunjit Singh Cheema flagged off the "Pedal for Democracy" rally at Ramliha Ground, Paonta Sahib. The SDM said the initiative, was taken by the Chief Electoral Officer of Himachal Pradesh in collaboration with the Sirmaur Cycling Association, aimed at promoting 100

per cent voter turnout in the Lok Sabha elections. "The primary objective is to ensure that every eligible voter participates in the democratic process," he added. Following directives from the Election Commission of India and the Chief Electoral Officer of Himachal Pradesh, various Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programmes are being continuously conducted to increase

the voter turnout in the region. "The programme demonstrates the strength of the Indian democracy, where citizens actively engage in the election process," Cheema remarked. He urged all participants to vote and encouraged children to motivate their families and neighbours to do the same. Highlighting the specifics of the Paonta Sahib Assembly constituency, the Assistant Election Officer said 86,788 voters,

including 44,880 male voters, are expected to cast their votes on June 1. President of the Cycling Association, detailed the rally route, which spanned approximately 13 km. The rally saw participation from 180 cyclists, including 50 young girls. In recognition of outstanding participants, awards were given for the best younger cyclist, best woman younger cyclist and senior citizen

cyclist. All participants received T-shirts and medals from the association. The event was graced by several dignitaries from the Sirmaur Cycling Association and local community members. The "Pedal for Democracy" programme not only highlighted the importance of voting, but also showcased the community's commitment to a robust democratic process through active participation and engagement. — OC



Children at the "Pedal for Democracy" programme in Paonta Sahib on Sunday.

'NOT JUST EMOTIONS'

Actress Sunny Leone, who hosts the dating reality show *MTV Splitsvilla X5* said on the latest episode of the show that contestants have to strike a balance between their emotions and the game. *MTV Splitsvilla X5: ExSqueeze Me Please* is available on MTV and JioCinema.



Tribune Life Style

HIMACHAL | MONDAY | 27 MAY 2024

Taylor rocks

Taylor Swift delivered a concert to remember at Estadio da Luz in Lisbon. She performed an acoustic mashup featuring the title track from her album *The Tortured Poets Department*.

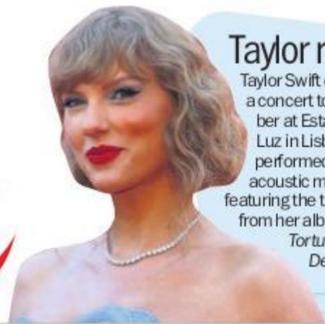


PHOTO: VICKY

Never say die

Mahima Chaudhary takes part in a breast cancer awareness programme in Ludhiana

SHIVANI BHAKOO

Mahima Chaudhary cares! And she shows it through her initiative called Ribbon of Care which aims at creating awareness about breast cancer. Mahima, who recently visited Ludhiana to attend an event called The Balancing Act, organised by the Ludhiana chapter of FICCI Flo, talked about how she battled the dreaded disease and came out stronger.

Mahima was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2022. She recalled how she went into depression after doctors revealed the nature of her ailment. "I was in the hospital during one of the chemotherapy sessions and I got a call from Anupam Kher. He was offering me a role in a film but I sounded low. When he asked me, I told him about my disease. Initially, he did not take me seriously. But when I sounded serious, he told me to go for the role even if I had lost my hair. He was so supportive. He is a real friend."

Remembering how tough it was for her when people used to troll her for not looking her glamorous self, she says she was grateful to those real friends who would think nothing of her baldness or looks. "We need that kind of a support system while battling this dreaded disease," she said. The trick, she said, was to not give up hope. "We all struggle at some point. When the storm is over, we surprise ourselves thinking how did we manage?"

Mahima, who had a successful stint in modelling before she entered Bollywood and delivered hits like *Pardes*, *Daag*, *Dil Kya Kare* and many more, danced to some hit numbers.



If Mrs Mahi was Punjabi

Patiala suit, gutt and jutti — Janhvi Kapoor lived it up as a Punjabi kudi as she promoted her film *Mr & Mrs Mahi* in Mohali

SHEETAL

WHEN in Rome, do as the Romans do. Janhvi Kapoor spelled it out for us quite literally as she arrived at CP67 Mall in Mohali on Saturday evening dressed in a neon yellow and pink Patiala suit to promote her upcoming film *Mr & Mrs Mahi*.

"Aap logon ke liye saaj dhajke aayi hun mein aaj," she told the crowd that gathered there to catch a glimpse her. She wanted to look like a Punjabi kudi and hoped that they liked her desi avatar.

The *Bawaal* actress even braided her hair and wore Punjabi jutti to complete the look. She promptly posted her picture on Instagram and captioned it as, 'If Mrs Mahi was a Punjabi kudi'.

She talked about the film and the rigorous 150 plus days of training that she had to undergo to play the role of a cricketer. Janhvi shared, "I like to put in my cent per cent effort to anything that I do. It has been inculcated by our parents that there's no shortcut to hard work. I know that the outcome of a project is beyond my control. So, I do what is in my control, which is putting my blood, sweat and tears into it." Janhvi says Punjab has that 'ghar wali feeling' which she first felt when she was filming for *Good Luck Jerry* here. "I stayed in Chandigarh, Patiala and some other places during the shooting of *Good Luck Jerry*. *Ghar jaisa hai mere liye Punjab*. I was looking forward to interact with the fans in Mohali."

After playing a cricketer, Janhvi is now full of respect and love for players. "I know how much of hard work, dedication and passion one needs to be a sports person. This film brought me close to my

father Boney Kapoor. Earlier, I never ever sat with him when he watched cricket matches. I didn't understand the game then. But after this film, my father and I watch cricket matches together. I have found a new way of bonding with him."

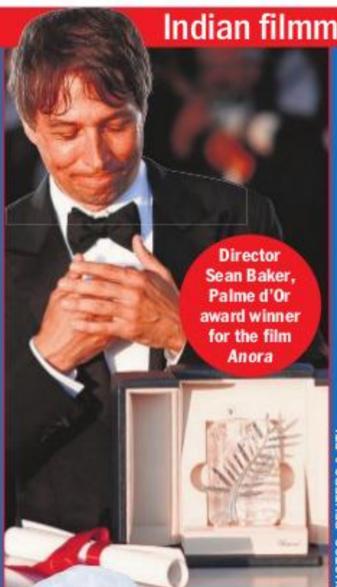
However, "It's not a story of a cricketer or has any connection with any real-life cricketer. Rather, it's a story about one's dreams and how one needs an understanding partner or people around to fulfil those dreams." Rajkumar Rao will be seen as her supportive husband. It will release on May 31. After attending the promotional event, Janhvi rushed to Pal Dhaba in Chandigarh to taste some local cuisine. She again posted a picture of her sipping lassi.

TITLE STORY

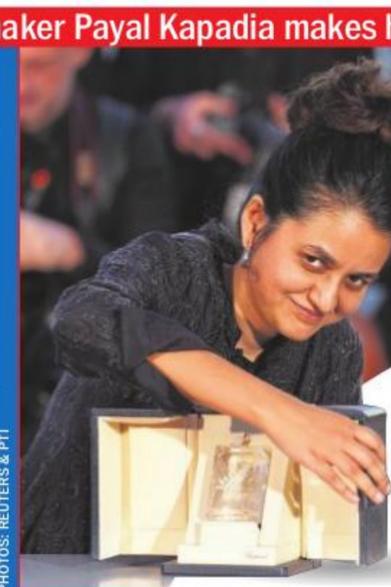
"We wanted a name which could work for both the husband and wife. While we had locked Mr and Mrs, the Mahi part came much later. Something like Navjot Singh Sidhu and his wife Navjot Kaur. Mahi happens to my favourite Indian cricketer player, MS Dhoni's nick name," says director Sharan Sharma.



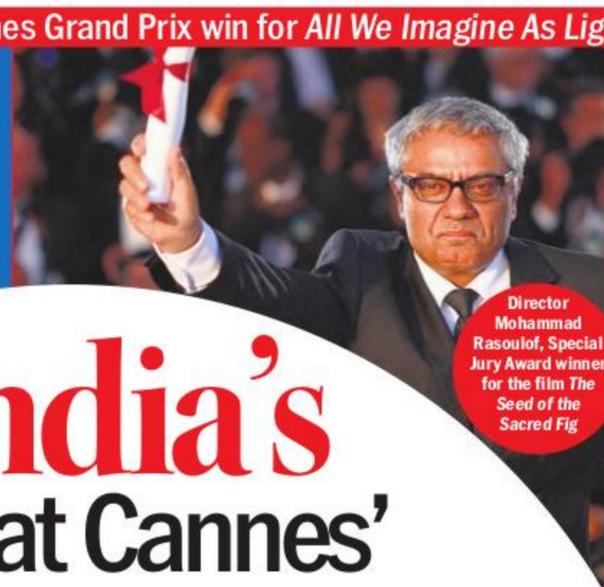
Indian filmmaker Payal Kapadia makes history with Cannes Grand Prix win for *All We Imagine As Light*, Bollywood celebrates



Director Sean Baker, Palme d'Or award winner for the film *Anora*



Payal Kapadia poses with the Grand Prix prize for *All We Imagine As Light*



Director Mohammad Rasoulof, Special Jury Award winner for the film *The Sacred Fig*



Director Coralie Fargeat, Best Screenplay award winner for *The Substance*



Director George Lucas accepts an honorary Palme d'Or award from Francis Ford Coppola



Director Jacques Audiard, Jury Prize award winner for the film *Emilia Perez*

'India's year at Cannes'

Filmmaker Payal Kapadia made history at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival as her drama *All We Imagine As Light* clinched the prestigious Grand Prix Award. The film, marking Kapadia's directorial debut, secured its place in cinematic lore as the first Indian film in three decades and the first ever by an Indian women director to grace the festival's main competition. Receiving thunderous applause, the film's screening garnered an eight-minute standing ovation.

Set against the backdrop of a bustling city, *All We Imagine As Light* is the story of Prabha, a nurse, whose life takes an unexpected turn when she receives a mysterious gift from her estranged husband.

All We Imagine As Light

stands as an Indo-French collaboration, co-produced by Petit Chaos from France and Chalk and Cheese Films from India.

The film marks the feature film debut of Payal Kapadia. Before this, she won the Golden Eye award at Cannes for her documentary *A Night of Knowing Nothing*.

INDIA SHINING

It was a triple feat for Indian talent at Cannes with Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light*, *Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know* by FTII student Chidananda S Naik, and Anasuya Sengupta of *The Shameless* fame winning major awards in each of the three competitive sections of the prestigious gala.

The 77th edition of Cannes Film Festival concluded on Saturday evening.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Members of the Indian film industry have been beaming with joy ever since they learnt about Payal winning the Grand Prix Award.

Actor-director Farhan Akhtar took to Instagram and wrote, "Heartiest congratulations #PayalKapadia and team #allweimagineaslight.. first Indian film to win the Cannes Grand Prix."

Kiara Advani also extended heartfelt greetings to the team of *All We Imagine As Light*. "Congratulationssss," she wrote.

Aditi Rao Hydari also gave a shout out to *All We Imagine As Light* film. "At a very perplexing time in history where only the noise from my incredible county seems to get amplified, here is an independent film by a first time director that wins the Grand Prix honour at @festivaldecannes. Please

take a moment and let us all stand and applaud this monumental achievement. This is the crowning glory of the fight for good Cinema in India. It may happen again, but not without the impact of #Payalkapadia's spectacular achievement. So proud, so grateful. My love and congratulations to the entire team! India in all her glory, and on Her own terms... What a moment," Aditi wrote on Instagram.

Taking to X, filmmaker Shekhar Kapur wrote, "Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light* won the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival!.. what an honour for her and her team. It seems to be India's year at Cannes. This is the 3rd, but the biggest award to Indian Cinema this year." — ANI & PTI