



**23-yr-old elected youngest Indian-origin mayor of British town**

P-7

**Peddi Trailer Launch: Ram Charan Assures Fans His Onscreen Pairing With Janhvi Kapoor 'Will Not Disappoint'**

P-10

## DA enhanced to 262 pc for employees

The government has enhanced dearness allowance (DA) for employees continuing to draw salary under the 6th Pay Commission from 257 per cent to 262 per cent of basic pay with effect from January 1, 2026.

The finance department issued an order in this regard stating that the revised DA will be applicable to employees drawing pay in the pre-revised pay scale and grade pay structure under the 6th Pay

Cont. on P9 >

## Woman murdered at Bari Brahmana

A woman was murdered in broad daylight in Lower Kartholi area of Bari Brahmana in Samba district of Jammu today.

She was identified as Anu Singh, wife of Ajay Singh of Lower Kartholi, Ward No 7, Krishna Nagar, Bari Brahmana.

Quoting initial inputs, officials said some family dispute could be the reason behind the murder of the woman, who was the mother of two children.

Police had registered a case in this connection.

## Ladakh police service recruitment board reconstituted

Ladakh LG Vinai Kumar Saxena has accorded sanction to the reconstitution of Ladakh Police (Subordinate) Service Recruitment Board with the objective of strengthening transparent, fair and efficient recruitment processes in the UT police.

The board reconstitution was approved following a proposal received from Ladakh police headquarters in view of the administrative changes & the unavailability of certain members of the earlier board. As a result, police headquarters

Cont. on P9 >

## DGHS advisory to protect citizens from heat stress

NEW DELHI, MAY 18: The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) under the Union health ministry, in coordination with Ayush ministry, has issued an advisory suggesting cooling refreshments, breathing techniques and yoga practices to reduce heat stress amid rising temperatures.

In view of heatwave conditions prevailing in several parts of India, the AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and homoeopathy) vertical under the DGHS, along with the Ministry of Ayush, has

Cont. on P9 >

## HC grants interim bail to Er Rashid

NEW DELHI, MAY 18: The Delhi High Court on Monday granted interim bail till June 2 to Baramulla MP Sheikh Abdul Rashid alias Er Rashid, who is lodged in prison in a terror-funding case, following his father's demise.

A bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Madhu Jain said during the interim bail period, Rashid shall always be accompanied by at least two police officials in plainclothes, who shall remain with him from the beginning of the journey from Tihar Jail until his return from Srinagar.

Cont. on P9 >

# Modi acknowledges Norway's support in fight against terrorism

### Says Pahalgam terror attack delayed Oslo visit

OSLO (NORWAY), MAY 18: Stating that Pahalgam terror attack had delayed his scheduled visit to Oslo, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a strong message of global unity, today acknowledged Norway's support for India in the fight against global terrorism.

"My scheduled travel to Norway was deferred in the wake of Pahalgam terror attack," he said whilst expressing deep gratitude to the Norwegian administration for maintaining solidarity with New Delhi in combating global terrorism and demonstrating "true friendship."

Addressing a joint press conference alongside his Norwegian counterpart Jonas Gahr Store shortly after his arrival, Prime Minister Modi conveyed his appreciation for the hospitable reception accorded to him and stated that he eagerly anticipated extending his fel-



icitations to the citizens of Norway on the historic occasion of their national Constitution Day celebrations.

"I am thankful for the grand welcome," PM Modi stated. "Tomorrow, on Norway's Constitution Day, I will congratulate the people of Norway for it," the Prime Minister added.

Reflecting upon the prior alteration to his travel itinerary that delayed this historic outreach, the Prime Minister explained the direct circumstances behind the scheduling shift. "I

couldn't come to Norway earlier because of Pahalgam," he noted.

Prime Minister Modi further underscored the profound significance of the diplomatic backing received from Oslo during that security crisis, emphasising that the European nation "stood with India against terrorism and showed true friendship."

In a historic milestone for bilateral diplomacy, PM Modi touched down in Oslo earlier in the day, marking the first time an Indian

Prime Minister has visited the Scandinavian nation in 43 years. Arriving for a two-day official tour following his engagements in Sweden, PM Modi's visit constitutes the crucial fourth leg of his ongoing tour, aimed at comprehensively revitalising India-Norway strategic and economic relations.

The itinerary for PM Modi's time in Oslo is packed with high-level engagements, including participating in the third India-Nordic Summit and holding critical bilateral discussions. While in the country, PM Modi is scheduled to call on King Harald V and Queen Sonja. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to next visit Italy as part of the last leg of his tour, which is the final stop of his five-nation tour after he visited the UAE, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Providing the critical backdrop to the Prime Minister's remarks, the deadly

Cont. on P9 >

## Par panel summons NTA chief

NEW DELHI, MAY 18:

A parliamentary panel has decided to review the implementation of reforms in the National Testing Agency (NTA) as well as the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case and has summoned NTA Chairperson Pradeep Kumar Joshi and other bureaucrats for deliberations.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports will seek the views of top education ministry bureaucrats on the alleged paper leak and reforms of NTA, which holds centralised admission tests

Cont. on P9 >

## Satheesan sworn in as Kerala CM



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MAY 18: V D Satheesan on Monday took oath as Kerala's Chief Minister, and Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar administered the oath of office to the Congress Legislature Party leader here.

Satheesan took oath in the name of God.

Besides Satheesan, his 20-member Cabinet will also be sworn in by the

Cont. on P9 >

## Kathua-Udh emerged as development hub: Jitendra



Himalayan Mail News JAMMU, MAY 18

Union Minister Jitendra Singh today said that Kathua-Udhampur parliamentary constituency had emerged as a development

Cont. on P9 >

# Shri Amarnathji Pilgrimage LG Sinha conducts on-site inspection of Yatri Niwas

Himalayan Mail News JAMMU, MAY 18

LG Manoj Sinha today conducted on-site inspection of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) Yatri Niwas at Pantha Chowk in Srinagar and took stock of the ongoing construction works and pilgrim facilities there.

On the occasion, he interacted with the officials concerned and directed them for expediting the progress and ensure completion of pending works well before commencement of Shri Amarnathji yatra.

The LG also reviewed the arrangements for sound and light show dedicated to Baba Barfani.

He was accompanied by SASB CEO Mandeep K Bhandari, Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board member Mukesh Garg, DIG (CKR) Rajiv Pandey, Srinagar SSP G V Sundeep Chakravarthy, Srinagar deputy commissioner Akshay Labroo and other se-



nior officers.

Shri Amarnathji Yatra is scheduled to commence on July 3, 2026, and conclude on August 28, 2026, spanning a total of 57 days. Registrations and medical certificate processing are currently underway through designated bank branches and online portals.

Advance registration for the annual Amarnath Yatra commenced from April 15 across 554 designated bank branches in the country, with Shri Amarnath Shrine Board issuing a de-

tailed step-by-step procedure for pilgrims.

According to officials, the registration and issuance of permits will be conducted on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to a fixed daily quota for each route at every designated branch. As per the guidelines, only pilgrims aged between 13 and 70 years will be eligible for registration, while women with more than six weeks of pregnancy will not be permitted to undertake the pilgrimage.

Cont. on P9 >

# Suwendu govt ends religion-based schemes in Bengal

### Scraps state OBC list

NEW DELHI, MAY 18: The chief minister Suwendu Adhikari-led West Bengal cabinet Monday scrapped assistance to the groups based on religious categorisation, effectively ending the religion-based schemes run during the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC government.

The BJP government has also done away with the existing state OBC list in accordance with the Calcutta high court judgement and would set up a panel to decide quota eligibility.

A few days ago, the Suwendu government reportedly withdrew petition filed by Mamata government against the high court stay on state OBC list roll out.

Last year on July 28, the CJI-led bench of the Supreme Court had vacated high court's stay on implementation of the new OBC list that had a total of 140 sub-groups under OBC-A and OBC-B categories, including 80 belonging to the Muslim community.

The Supreme Court had said that it was well settled

that the Executive can notify such a list without passing legislation. The earlier list, which was struck down by the high court, had 113 OBC sub-groups with 77 from the Muslim community and 36 from others.

"The Bengal cabinet decided to discontinue government assistance to groups based on religious categorisation from June. The government also scrapped the existing state OBC list in accordance with the Calcutta High Court

Cont. on P9 >

# Citizenship Rules amended, passport declaration mandatory for applicants

NEW DELHI, MAY 18: The Centre has amended the Citizenship Rules, 2009, making it mandatory for applicants from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh seeking Indian citizenship to declare the status of passports issued by their home countries.

The Ministry of Home Affairs introduced a new provision under which applicants must declare that they are not in possession of a valid and/or expired passport issued by the governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan or Bangladesh.

If an applicant possesses an active passport, the person will have to provide details including the passport number, date and place of issue, and date of expiry, the gazette notification said.

Applicants will also have to declare that they will surrender their valid and/or expired passport to the concerned Senior Superintendent of Post or Superintendent of Post within 15 days of approval of their citizenship application, according to a Home Ministry notification issued on Monday.

The new provision will be

inserted after Schedule IC of the Citizenship Rules, 2009, which applies to Afghan, Bangladeshi and Pakistani nationals belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities seeking Indian citizenship.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, provides a pathway to Indian citizenship for undocumented non-Muslim migrants, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians, from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who entered India before December 31, 2014.

Cont. on P9 >

# Par panel to review groundwork for VB-G RAM G rollout

NEW DELHI, MAY 18: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj is scheduled to hold a briefing on May 20 with representatives of the Department of Rural Development on the preparatory work undertaken for implementation of the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission-Gramin (VB-G RAM G).

According to information shared on the Parliament website, officials from the Ministry of Rural Development will brief the panel on the subject,

"Preparatory work done for implementation of Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission-Gramin (VB-G RAM G)."

The meeting comes days after the Centre announced that the VB-G RAM G Act will come into force across the country from July 1, replacing the two-decade-old Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

The government described the move as a "historic transition" in India's rural development architecture aligned with the vision of "Viksit Bharat 2047".

Under the new framework, every rural household whose adult members volunteer to undertake unskilled manual work will be entitled to 125 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, an increase from the existing 100-day guarantee under MGNREGA.

The Ministry of Rural Development has said the transition from MGNREGA to the new framework would be seamless and ongoing works under the existing scheme as of June 30 would continue under the new system.

Cont. on P9 >

# UAPA conviction rate below 1 pc in J&K, 6 pc nationally: SC

NEW DELHI, MAY 18: The Supreme Court, while granting bail to a Jammu and Kashmir man accused in a narco-terror case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and incarcerated for over five years, noted that UAPA conviction rates across India ranged between 1.5 pc and 4 pc between 2019 and 2023, while conviction rates in Jammu and Kashmir remained below 1 pc.

Referring to NCRB data placed before Parliament by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, a bench of Justice BV Nagarathna and

Justice Ujjal Bhuyan said that these statistics point to a high probability of acquittals in such cases at the end of trial.

"Therefore, for all India figures, we have 2 pc to 6 pc conviction, meaning thereby that there is 94 pc to 98 pc possibility of acquittal in such cases in the country. In so far as the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, the annual rate of conviction is always less than 1 pc. It means that at the end of the trial there is 99 pc possibility of acquittal in such cases", the court observed.

The court referred to the low conviction rates in UAPA cases while emphasising that courts could not allow prolonged incarceration solely on the basis of allegations and held that "bail is the rule and jail is the exception" even under the anti-terror law. The court reiterated the observation in Union of India v. KA Najeed that Section 43D(5) of UAPA could not be used as the sole basis for denying bail, resulting in prolonged pre-trial incarceration.

"There is one more good reason why we should fol

Cont. on P9 >

# 'India buying Russian oil irrespective of US sanctions waivers'

NEW DELHI, MAY 18: India has continued buying Russian oil before, during and after US sanctions waivers, a senior petroleum ministry official said on Monday, as refiners and traders indicated that supplies remain available despite the latest expiry of the American exemption.

The official asserted that the country's energy security and economic interests remain the top priority amid rising global fuel prices and tensions in West Asia.

The remarks came amid growing international con-

cern after the Trump administration allowed a key sanctions waiver linked to Russian seaborne oil exports to lapse over the weekend.

Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, told a press conference that India's approach to crude oil imports has remained "consistent" despite evolving geopolitical developments.

She emphasised that New Delhi's procurement decisions are guided by affordability, availability and national interest, particu-

larly at a time when volatility in global energy markets has intensified.

"Regarding the American waiver on Russia, I would like to emphasise that we have been purchasing from Russia earlier... I mean before the waiver also, during the waiver also, and now also," she stated.

Sharma pointed out that India's crude sourcing frameworks are dictated entirely by market dynamics and robust supply networks. "It is basically the commercial sense which

Cont. on P9 >

# China to boost trade for US agri products after Trump-Xi summit

WASHINGTON, MAY 18: China has agreed to ramp up trade for US agricultural products such as beef and poultry, buying at an annualized rate of \$17 billion per year for 2026 and at that level for 2027 and 2028, the White House announced, two days after President Donald Trump returned from a high-stakes summit in Beijing where he sought to ease the impact on American farmers from the trade war he launched last year.

China would restore market access for US beef and resume imports of poultry from US states determined

by the US Department of Agriculture to be free of the bird flu, the White House said. The deals are on top of China's soybean purchase commitments last year.

The agreements offer some hope to American farmers harmed by the trade war as they saw a major export market for soybeans and other products dry up. Farmers also are feeling new pressure from Trump administration policies - the war that the US and Israel launched against Iran has curtailed shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital trade corridor that has restricted global

fertilizer supplies and sent those prices soaring.

There was no immediate confirmation of the terms from Beijing.

China's Ministry of Commerce on Saturday said the two sides would "resolve or make substantial progress toward resolving certain non-tariff barriers and market access issues" regarding agricultural goods.

The US would "actively work" to address China's concerns regarding detention of its dairy products, seafood, the export of potted bonsai, and the recognition of Shandong province

Cont. on P9 >