

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Cong Will Not Rest Till Pradhan Resigns: Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI, MAY 24: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said his party will not rest until Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigns and a fool-proof system is put in place to prevent paper leaks like in NEET.

He shared a video of students protesting in Hyderabad, highlighting the NEET paper leak and demanding Pradhan's resignation. They also raised slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pradhan.

"When millions of youth are on the streets, the future



of 22 lakh children is at stake and the PM remains silent, then the government is not focused on responding but is busy evading," the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha said.

"Until Dharmendra Pradhan resigns and a foolproof system is established to prevent paper leaks like NEET, we will not stop," Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X.

The Congress has been demanding that Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan step down or be sacked after the NEET-UG exam was cancelled due to paper leak. (PTI)

Post-Covid hip damage fuels 40 pc rise in surgeries among young Indians: Experts

NEW DELHI, MAY 24: A worrying post-pandemic orthopaedic trend has emerged across India, with doctors reporting a significant rise in cases of hip arthritis and avascular necrosis (AVN), a painful condition caused by disruption of blood supply to the hip bone, particularly among younger and middle-aged adults.

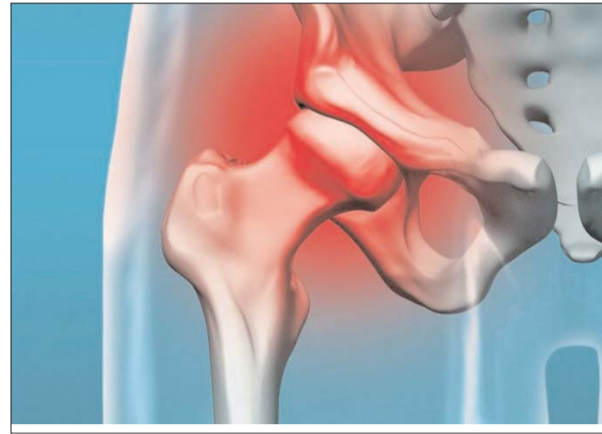
Experts at the 2nd DELHI HIP 360 Conference, held at Crowne Plaza New Delhi on Sunday, warned that the post-Covid era has accelerated hip joint damage and increased the demand for Total Hip Replacement (THR) surgeries across the country.

The Delhi Orthopaedic Association organised the conference in association with the Indian Arthroplasty Association.

The conference brought together leading orthopaedic surgeons, arthroplasty specialists, fellows, and residents from across India to deliberate on the latest advances in Total Hip Arthroplasty (THA), complex hip reconstruction, robotic-assisted surgery, rehabilitation, and management of post-Covid hip complications.

Experts at the conference said that hospitals are witnessing a notable increase in patients presenting with severe hip pain, limping, stiffness, and difficulty in walking due to AVN and early hip arthritis.

Several recent studies globally have suggested a correlation between high-dose or prolonged steroid use during COVID-19 treatment and osteonecrosis of the femoral head, especially among patients who already



had underlying vascular or metabolic risk factors.

Medical experts noted that AVN, once largely seen in older adults or trauma patients, is now increasingly affecting individuals in their 30s and 40s. In many cases, delayed diagnosis allows the disease to progress silently until the hip joint collapses, eventually requiring total hip replacement surgery to restore mobility and quality of life.

Dr L. Tomar, organising Chairman of DELHI HIP 360 and Director, Department of Orthopaedics and Joint Replacement at Max Hospital, Delhi, said, "We are observing a 40 per cent rise in hip replacement surgeries in younger people. Steroids played a life-saving role during the Covid pandemic. Still, indiscriminate or prolonged use in some patients has been associated with a rise in osteonecrosis and early degenerative changes in the hip joint."

"We are now seeing relatively younger patients coming with severe hip damage, collapse of the femoral head, and advanced arthritis requiring early hip replacement surgeries," he said.

Dr Tomar further stated that early diagnosis is critical because if AVN is detected in the initial stages, joint-preserving procedures may still be possible before complete destruction of the hip occurs.

Research published in international orthopaedic journals has shown that steroid-induced AVN may develop within months after exposure, with the hip joint being the most commonly affected site.

Dr Karun Jain, Organising Secretary of the conference and a senior orthopaedic surgeon at Pushpanjali Medical Centre in Delhi, said that one of the biggest challenges with AVN is that patients often ignore early symptoms such as groin pain or stiffness, assuming it to be muscular pain.

"By the time they seek medical advice, the hip joint may already have undergone irreversible collapse. Awareness, timely MRI evaluation, and early intervention can help reduce disability," Dr Jain said.

The conference featured extensive scientific discussions on complex primary and revision hip arthroplasty, robotic and naviga-

tion-assisted hip surgery, infection prevention, difficult hip reconstructions, dysplasia management, and enhanced recovery protocols.

Surgeons also discussed how advancements in implant design, minimally invasive approaches, and precision-based technologies are improving surgical outcomes and reducing recovery time.

Dr Gaurav Govil, Associate Director, Orthopaedics and Joint Replacement at Max Hospital Patparganj, said, "Total Hip Replacement today is among the most successful surgeries in modern orthopaedics. With better implants, advanced surgical planning, and faster rehabilitation techniques, patients are able to return to normal life much earlier than before.

However, the focus must remain on early diagnosis and evidence-based treatment to prevent avoidable disability." Experts at the conference stressed that India could see a substantial increase in demand for hip replacement surgeries over the next decade if early screening and preventive orthopaedic care are not strengthened. They emphasised that continuous academic collaboration, surgeon training, and adoption of modern arthroplasty techniques are essential to improve long-term patient outcomes.

The conference concluded with a strong call for greater public awareness regarding persistent hip pain after COVID recovery, responsible steroid use, and timely orthopaedic consultation to prevent severe joint damage and preserve mobility in younger populations. (Agencies)

Avalanche Hits Kanchan Ganga Near Badrinath, No Casualties Reported

GOPESHWAR, MAY 24: An avalanche triggered from the Kuber Bhandar peak near Badrinath in Chamoli district on Sunday morning struck the upper catchment area of Kanchan Ganga, officials said.

The incident, located about two kilometres ahead of the Badrinath shrine, caused no loss of life or property damage, they said.

The officials said the avalanche did not cause any disruption at the Badrinath National Highway and termed such incidents around snow-covered peaks as "common natural occurrences".

"This is a natural process and such events occur from time to time," Chamoli District Magistrate Gaurav Kumar said.

He said the avalanche did



not reach the main road, as the snow mass had stopped within a valley area, adding that traffic and daily life in the region remain completely unaffected.

The district magistrate urged the public to ignore rumours circulating on social media and other platforms, while advising citizens to rely solely on official

information issued by the administration.

"The district administration is continuously monitoring the area," Kumar said. (Agencies)

WHO Declares Ebola Outbreak 'Public Health Emergency' Of International Concern

NEW DELHI, MAY 24: In light of the reported outbreaks of Ebola disease in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda, the World Health Organisation (WHO), under the International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005, on May 17, determined the situation to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has also officially declared the ongoing

outbreak of Bundibugyo strain Ebola virus disease affecting the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda as a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security (PHECS).

Further, the WHO IHR Emergency Committee on May 22 issued temporary recommendations to strengthen disease surveillance at Points of Entry to "detect, assess, report and manage travellers with unexplained febrile illness arriving from areas with documented Bundibugyo virus detection" while also "discouraging travel to areas

with documented Bundibugyo virus detection".

As per the press release, countries bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, including South Sudan, are assessed to be at high risk of disease transmission.

Ebola disease is a viral haemorrhagic fever caused by infection with the Bundibugyo virus strain of Ebola virus. It is a serious disease with a high mortality rate. At present, no vaccines or specific treatments have been approved to prevent or treat Ebola disease caused by the Bundibugyo virus strain.

In view of the evolving situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other affected countries, and in line with WHO's recommendations, the Government of India advises all Indian citizens to avoid non-essential travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and South Sudan until further notice.

Indian citizens currently residing in or travelling to these countries are advised to strictly follow public health guidance issued by local authorities and maintain heightened precautions, the press release said.

Norway-set drama about political polarization 'Fjord' wins Palme d'Or at Cannes

CANNES, MAY 24: Cristian Mungiu's Norway-set drama about political polarisation, "Fjord", has won the Palme d'Or, handing the Cannes Film Festival's top honour for the second time to Mungiu, the Romanian director of "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days".

At a 79th Cannes Film Festival that saw few films cause a stir, "Fjord" found wide admiration for its engrossing tale of what Mungiu called "left-wing fundamentalism." It stars Sebastian Stan and Renate Reinsve as Romanian Evangelicals who move to Norway, but soon after have their children taken from them by child services for spanking them.

"Today the society is split. It's divided. It's radicalized," said Mungiu. "This film is a pledge against any type of fundamentalism. It's a pledge for these things we quote very often, like trauma and inclusion and empathy. These are lovely words but we need to apply them more often."

Mungiu becomes just the 10th filmmaker to win the Palme d'Or twice. His "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2

Days", a Romanian abortion drama, won the award in 2007.

The win for "Fjord" extends one of the movies' most extraordinary streaks. Neon, the specialty label, has now taken seven Palme d'Or winners in a row. "Fjord" adds to its unparalleled run, including last year's champion, Jafar Panahi's "It Was Just an Accident," and the 2024 winner, "Anora." The latter went on to win best picture at the Oscars.

Minotaur wins Grand Prix. The Grand Prix, or second prize, went to "Minotaur," Andrey Zvyagintsev's domestic thriller set against Russia's war with Ukraine. Loosely based on Claude Chabrol's 1969 film "The Unfaithful Wife", "Minotaur" is about a Russian businessman suspicious of his wife's indiscretions. At the same time, he's tasked with conscripting 150 of his workers for Vladimir Putin's war machine.

"The only person who can stop this butchery is you. Mr President of the Russian Federation," Zvyagintsev said, accepting his award. "Put an end to this slaughter. The

whole world is waiting for this."

By wide consensus, it wasn't a banner festival. Hollywood largely sat out this year's edition. Many of the selections struggled to bowl over critics. The global buzz that Cannes typically generates was fitful at best.

But the awards handed out Saturday as the 79th Cannes drew to a close will significantly raise the international profiles of the winners. Last year's Cannes produced a long string of Oscar nominees, including "Sentimental Value" and "The Secret Agent".

The nine-member jury that decided the awards was headed by Korean filmmaker Park Chan-wook. Demi Moore, Chloe Zhao and Stellan Skarsgard were also jurors. Chan-wook, a Cannes regular including last year with his satirical thriller "No Other Choice," joked that he preferred not to give away the Palme.

"To be honest, I didn't want to award the Palme d'Or to any of the films, because it's an award I myself have never gotten," Chan-wook told re-

porters after the ceremony. "But I had no other choice."

Awards are split and shared. Two films won for best director: the Polish filmmaker Pawel Pawlikowski, for his postwar drama "Fatherland," and the Spanish creative duo Javier Ambrossi and Javier Calvo for "The Black Ball", a generation-spanning queer epic "The Black Ball."

It was Pawlikowski's second time winning the same Cannes prize in as many films, following his "Cold War" in 2018. But the award marked a breakthrough for Ambrossi and Calvo in their first Cannes entry.

"No one knew us. Thierry didn't know us," Ambrossi told reporters, referring to Thierry Fremaux, Cannes artistic director. "It was just that the movie spoke."

Virginie Efira and Tao Okamoto, the two stars of Ryusuke Hamaguchi's "All of a Sudden" shared the best actress award. In the elegantly empathetic drama, the two play women brought together in friendship out of their mutual sense of care for others.

Spearfisher mauled on Great Barrier Reef in Australia's second fatal shark attack in a week

MELBOURNE, MAY 24: A spearfisher was mauled on the Great Barrier Reef on Sunday in Australia's second fatal shark attack in just over a week, police said.

The 39-year-old man was with three friends diving from a boat at Kennedy Shoal off the Queensland state coast south of Cairns when he was attacked, Police Inspector Elaine Burns said.

"The man had been spearfishing when he was at-

tacked and died from a critical head injury," Burns told reporters.

The victim, a Cairns resident, was brought by boat around noon to the tourist town of Hull Heads, where paramedics were waiting. He had "sustained injuries not compatible with life," an ambulance service statement said.

Kennedy Shoal is a shallow coral reef popular with recreational fishers. Divers are

also attracted to the Lady Bowen, a 19th-century shipwreck.

Fishers reported bull sharks had been seen in the area before the attack.

A shark fatally mauled spearfisher Steve Matabonni on May 16 at a coral reef off Rotttnest Island near the southwest coast of Western Australia state.

The 38-year-old Perth resident was taken by boat to the holiday island, where

paramedics were unable to resuscitate him.

A five-metre (16-foot) white shark was suspected.

Australia has averaged more than three fatal shark attacks a year in recent decades. The latest death is Australia's third shark fatality for 2026.

Nico Antic, 12, died in a hospital days after he was attacked by a suspected bull shark off a Sydney beach on January 18. (AP)

Pak PM Shehbaz hails Trump's 'extraordinary efforts to pursue peace' in West Asia

ISLAMABAD, MAY 24: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday praised Donald Trump for his diplomatic efforts aimed at promoting peace and stability in West Asia, underlining that the US President held a "productive call" with different leaders, including Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir.

Trump held a phone call on Saturday with the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkiye, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Jordan and Pakistan.

Trump had a telephone conversation with Pakistan's Army Chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, who was in Tehran. Munir met with top Iranian leaders and discussed accelerating efforts to achieve a "conclusive agreement" between the United States and Iran.

As Munir wrapped up his trip, President Trump said in a statement that a memorandum of understanding on a peace deal has been "largely negotiated" with Iran.

"Final aspects and details of the Deal are currently being discussed, and will be announced shortly,"



Trump wrote on Trump Social.

Trump posted the announcement after separate calls with the leaders of Muslim-majority nations and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

PM Sharif, in his statement, praised Trump while committing to continue efforts for peace in the region.

"I congratulate President Donald Trump on his extraordinary efforts to pursue peace and for holding a very useful and productive tele-

phone call earlier today, with the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkiye, Egypt, the UAE, Jordan and Pakistan," he said on X.

He said that Munir represented Pakistan in the telephone call and "I greatly appreciate his tireless efforts during the entire process."

"The discussions provided a useful opportunity to exchange views on the current regional situation and how to move the ongoing peace efforts forward to bring lasting peace in the region," the

prime minister stated.

He also said that "Pakistan will continue its peace efforts with utmost sincerity, and we hope to host the next round of talks very soon."

Pakistan had hosted the first face-to-face intensive talks between the US and Iran following the ceasefire announced on April 8.

Though the peace effort failed to clinch a deal, Islamabad carried forward its initiative in collaboration with several other Muslim countries. (PTI)