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American award-winning comedian and actor • **12.** Lauren Bacall, 89, American award-winning actress • **24.** Richard Attenborough, 90, English award-winning actor, producer and director (*Gandhi*).

September 1. Elena Varzi, 87, Italian actress (*Path of Hope*).

India

2013 November 10. Pushpa Thangadorai, 82, Tamil author • **17.** Om Prakash Valmiki, 63, writer.

December 10. Sri-kanta Wadiyar, 60, Indian politician, leader of Mysore Kingdom and Wadiyar dynasty • **16.** Uthradom Thirunal Marthanda Varma, 91, titular Maharaja of Travancore since 1991 • **27.** Farooq Sheikh, 65, Hindi actor • **29.** Jagadish Mohanty, 62, Oriya language writer.



Farooq Sheikh

2014 February 5. Juthika Roy, 92, legendary bhajan singer • **13.** Balu Mahendra, 75, award-winning film director and actor. • **13.** Ghulam Mohammad Saznawaz, 74, Sufi music maestro • **17.** Amar Kant, 88, noted Hindi litterateur and Jnanpith award winner • **R.K. Srikantan**, 94, eminent Carnatic vocalist • **Prokash Karmakar**, 81, eminent painter noted for his landscapes and nudes • **C R Simha**, 72, renowned Kannada theatre and film personality.

March 1. Bangaru Laxman, 74, former President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (2000-2001) • **20.** Khushwant Singh, 99, journalist and author • **27.** P. Ramdas, 83, Malayalam film director.

April 7. Ashish Bose, 83, Indian demographer, coined the term "BIMARU".

25. Nanda, 75, Hindi film actress.

May 16. Russi Mody, 96, Indian steel and airline executive, President of Tata Steel, In-



C.P. Krishnan Nair

dian Airlines and Air India, recipient of the Padma Bhushan (1989) • **17.** C.P. Krishnan Nair, 92, Indian hotelier, founder and chairman of The Leela Group of Hotels, recipient of the Padma Bhushan (2010) • **21.** R. Umanath, 92, Indian politician and political leader (CPKM), MP for Pudukottai (1962-1971), Tamil Nadu MLA for Nagapattinam (1977-1984) • **26.** Basileios Thoma Didymos I, 92, Indian Orthodox Church hierarch, Catholicos of The East and Malankara Metropolitan (2005-2010) • **28.** Mitraniketan Viswanathan, 86, Indian social reformer and environmentalist, founder of Mitraniketan.

June 3. Gopinath Munde, 64, politician • **10.** Narendra Patni, 71, founder of Patni Computer Systems • **14.** Telegana Shakuntala, 63, film and stage actress.

July 10. Zohra Sehgal, 102, actress and choreographer • **15.** Sulekha Hussain, 85, Urdu novelist • **17.** J. Sasikumar, 85, Malayalam filmmaker and director.

August 5. Pran Kumar Sharma, 75, Indian cartoonist (Chacha Chaudhry) • **5.** Arvind Apte, 79, cricketer • **6.** Smitha Talwalkar, 59, film actress, producer and director • **19.** Adyar K. Lakshman, 80, Indian dancer • **20.** B K S Iyengar, 95, founder of Iyengar Yoga • **22.** U. R. Ananthamurthy, 81, writer and critic • **30.** Bipan Chandra, 86, Indian historian, specialising in economic and political history of modern India.

September 1. Maya Rao, 86, Kathak dancer • **2.** G E Vahanvati, 65, former Attorney General of India. • **3.** A.P. Venkateswaran, 84, former Foreign Secretary of India • **19.** U. Srinivas, 45, mandolin player.



U. Srinivas

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DIABETIC EYE DISEASES

Understanding the disease and its symptoms

Diabetes mellitus is the body's inability in handling glucose, due mainly to a combination of insulin deficiency (either relative or absolute) and insulin inaction (termed insulin resistance). In normal persons, insulin takes glucose from the blood and delivers it to wherever it is required. When this does not happen, blood sugar levels go up, and diabetes occurs. High sugar levels per se do not cause symptoms. So why are we so obsessed about tight sugar control? The reason is that high sugar levels cause certain changes inside blood vessels, which in turn result in damages to various organs of the body. Studies have shown that tight control over blood sugar (and blood pressure, if high) can prevent, and in some cases reverse, these organ damages.

One of the organs commonly affected in diabetes is the eye. The three eye diseases that might occur in diabetics are diabetic retinopathy, cataract and glaucoma. Although cataract and glaucoma are not limited to diabetics, they occur more commonly in this disease. The common presentations in both these disorders are headache and blurring of vision. Diagnosis is fairly simple, and surgical treatment is the same as in non-diabetic individuals. However, careful blood-glucose control is absolutely mandatory during and after surgery

Diabetic retinopathy, as the name implies, is an eye disease that is specific to diabetes. Retina is the part at the back of the eye where light falls after entering the eye and passing through the lens, somewhat similar to a movie projector and the screen; the screen being the retina. The

thin blood vessels supplying the retina get affected by the high sugars of diabetics, causing tiny hemorrhages and leaks. At this stage, there are no vision-related problems, so unless routinely checked for, this early retinopathy is likely to be missed. In some cases, the retina undergoes swelling (termed macular edema), which causes blurred vision. Routine eye examination is recommended in all diabetics, as early retinopathy and macular edema needs to be treated with laser therapy, a relatively inexpensive and painless procedure. If missed, later stages of retinopathy are not so easily treatable. If retinopathy is allowed to proceed, new blood-vessels start developing over the retina (termed proliferative retinopathy). These vessels are weak, and may subsequently break down to bleed inside the eye. Since a blood clot is opaque, this causes sudden loss of vision in that eye in part or whole, depending on the size of the clot.

Prior to an actual bleed, proliferative retinopathy can also be managed with laser, but once a bleed occurs, the only discourse is surgery, which is performed only at specialized centres. Small bleeds may rarely disappear spontaneously, but may leave behind bands of scar-tissue that might pull at the retina and cause it to detach from the underlying tissue, which might also need surgical repair.

To sum up, diabetic eye diseases are an important group of diabetic complications. Regular eye check-up can identify early stages of retinopathy, and treatment at these early stages is relatively simple, with laser therapy. Later stages of the disease may require more specialized surgical care. But as the old adage goes, "prevention is (always) better than cure"!



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