

# Showcasing Barren for tourism promotion



ROOPA LALL

**PORT BLAIR, SEPT 27/--/ Arrange for more trips, take all the measures for tourist convenience, make Barren Island, the only active volcano of India, a major tourist attraction in the islands, that is what all tourism stakeholders here urged the administration to do. With increasing tourist footfalls in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, stakeholders in the tourism industry have sought widening of the tourism base in the islands by adding new locations in the tourism map of the islands. Barren Island is one such spot which has been attracting a lot of curiosity and eagerness among the tourists. The Administration in the past has promoted volcano tourism by operating boats to**

**Tourism stakeholders seek administration to include Barren Island, the only active volcano of India in the tourism map of the islands in order to attract more footfalls**

and from Barren. But unfortunately, it was for a limited period. The volcano tourism started when Barren started to erupt and ended when the eruption halted. Incidentally Barren Island is the only active volcano in India which lies about 138 km northeast

of Port Blair. A few years back, the A&N Administration capitalized this unique place as a tourist destination by scheduling one of its mainland-going passenger ships to Barren Island, once in a week. The sailing was scheduled on weekends so as to suit the convenience of tourists and locals alike. Despite no information of the Barren eruption, volcano tourism can still be promoted as a tourism destination, say stakeholders. With bigger tourist cruise vessels like Coral Queen starting night sailing for tourists, the UT administration can take an initiative to revive unique locations like Barren Island with proper publicity which will be a welcome gesture and help the tourism industry by instilling a hope of revival.

(Contd. on page-6)

## Awareness prog on 'Wild Life Conservation' at Model School Sita Nagar

EOI CORRESPONDENT

**DIGLIPUR, SEPT 27/--/ In order to sensitize the students of the rural area about the unique bio-diversity of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, the Forest department conducted an awareness programme at Govt. Model Senior Secondary School, Sita Nagar, Diglipur on Tuesday. Speaking on the rich biodiversity of the Islands, the Range Officer, Mr. LJM Lobo said that the bio-diversity is unique in the world, and it's the duty of every Islander to protect and preserve it. Showing the video clips of the precious local flora and fauna, he described the importance of each species in maintaining the balance of the fragile ecosystem. He said it's very unfortunate that some greedy selfish persons, without knowing the consequences, tend to kill these rare species, thus making them extinct. Calling upon the students to disseminate the message of wildlife conservation, in their locality, Mr. Lobo said that the natural beauty and the rich biodiversity, has earned goodwill for the**



Islands in the world and it's the responsibility of each Islander to preserve it. Responding to the queries raised by the students, he said there are many laws related to wild life protection, in different schedules, having provisions of

strict punishment with heavy penalty. He asked the students to explain these laws to the people of their villages and advise them to stay away from committing illegal offences related to wildlife. Expressing his gratitude to the visiting team, for conducting such programme on a very important topic, Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh, CRC In-charge, requested the department to conduct more such sessions, involving the students of other classes also. The awareness session was very lively and useful, as it was reflected from the types of queries raised by the students. It was a participative type of session, and students took part with great enthusiasm and interest. Around 100 students participated in this programme.



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## Nature camp on 'Biodiversity Conservation' at Turtle beach, Karmatang



KARTIK

**MAYABUNDER, SEPT 27/--/A nature camp on 'Biodiversity Conservation' was organised by the Karmatang Range Office under Mayabunder Division. The aim of organizing the nature camp was to generate awareness about biodiversity conservation at Turtle Beach, Karmatang.**

(Contd. on page-6)

**MORE LOCAL NEWS ON PAGE-3,5,6**



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# Modi to flag off Vande Bharat Express during Gujarat visit

## To lay foundation stones for Rs 29,000-cr projects

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 27 /--** / Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off Gandhinagar-Mumbai Vande Bharat Express and Ahmedabad Metro rail, and lay foundation stones for several projects worth more than Rs 29,000 crore during his two-day visit to poll-bound Gujarat from September 29. An official statement said the projects are spread across Surat, Bhavnagar, Ahmedabad and Ambaji, and are aimed at developing world-class infrastructure and enhancing mobility and ease of living. Prime Minister Modi will also participate in Navratri festival celebrations in Ahmedabad. Gujarat is slated for assembly elections later this year, with the ruling BJP making all out efforts to register a thumping win and continuing its winning streak in the state since 1995. The total cost of projects to be

inaugurated in Surat is more than Rs 3,400 crore. At Bhavnagar, Modi will lay the foundation stone and inaugurate multiple



developmental initiatives worth over Rs 5,200 crore. Among the infrastructure projects to be inaugurated by Modi is the Phase-I of the Ahmedabad Metro project. He will also flag off the

Gandhinagar-Mumbai Central Vande Bharat Express. The statement said the prime minister will also take a ride on the Vande

Bharat Express to Kalupur railway station on September 30. After flagging off the Ahmedabad Metro rail project, he will take a metro ride from Kalupur station to Doordarshan Kendra station.

Modi will also lay the foundation stone of the world's first CNG Terminal at Bhavnagar and declare open the 36th National Games, which are being held for the first time in Gujarat. The prime minister's engagements also include inaugurating Phase I of DREAM City - a project aimed to complement the rapid growth of the diamond trading business in Surat. He will also lay the foundation stone of a broad gauge railway line, which will make it easier for pilgrims to travel to Ambaji. Modi will visit the Ambaji temple and pay obeisance there. He will also attend Maha Aarti at Gabbar Tirtha. According to the statement, PM Modi will lay the foundation stones and dedicate development projects to the nation worth over Rs 7,200 crore in Ambaji. (PTI)



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh felicitating the winners of the 2nd edition of the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) Champions Award during the 5th Annual Session in New Delhi

## CBI takes over probe into extortion allegations against Maharashtra minister

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 27 /--** / The CBI has taken over the investigation into allegations of assault and extortion against Maharashtra minister Girish Mahajan levelled by the director of a Jalgaon-based education trust, officials said on Tuesday. The Maharashtra home department, headed by deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis, had recommended the CBI probe against Mahajan on July 22 which was forwarded to the agency by the Department of Personnel and Training on September 2. Following the procedure, the CBI has re-registered the FIR lodged earlier by the Jalgaon police and later, taken over by the Pune Police on January 5 last year, they said. The FIR was transferred to Pune because the alleged crime had taken place in the city. It was filed against 28 people, including Mahajan, a BJP leader. Vijay Patil, a director of the Jalgaon Jilha Maratha Vidya Prasarak Sahakari Samaj, had filed the complaint with Nimbhore police in December. Patil told police that in 2018, he and his colleague had gone to Pune to collect old records of the institute from its former secretary Tanaji Bhoite on the instruction of his elder brother Narendra Patil, who was the chairman of the institute. While they were in Pune, Nilesh Bhoite, one of the accused, allegedly told Patil to hand over the institute to him as Mahajan was interested in it. He also made a video call to Mahajan, who allegedly told Patil to ask all directors to submit their resignations and hand over the reins to Nilesh Bhoite. The accused offered Patil Rs 1 crore, but when he declined, he was allegedly taken to a flat in the Sadashiv Peth area, where one of the accused hit him in the head and threatened him at knife-point. Mahajan has denied all allegations and dubbed it "vendetta politics". (PTI)

## Cong to field all its sitting MLAs in Himachal: Sources

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 27 /--** / The Congress on Tuesday approved party tickets to all the 20 sitting MLAs in Himachal Pradesh and is learnt to have finalised the names of another 15 candidates for the upcoming assembly elections in the state, sources said. The decision to field all party MLAs was taken at a meeting of the party's Central Election Committee headed by Congress president Sonia Gandhi. The meeting was held at Gandhi's 10, Janpath residence, where senior leaders Ambika Soni, K C Venugopal, Girija Vyas, Mukul Wasnik, Verrappa Moily and Mohsina Kidwai were present. AICC in-charge for Himachal Pradesh Rajeev Shukla and HP PCC president Pratibha Singh were also present. Some of the names approved at the meeting include Vikramaditya Singh from Shimla Rural and Mukesh Agnihotri from Haroli. Singh is the son of former chief minister Virbhadr Singh and Agnihotri is the CLP leader in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly. Virbhadr Singh's wife Pratibha Singh, who is the party MP from Mandi, is unlikely to contest, the sources said. The election to the 68-member Himachal Pradesh Assembly is due this year. (PTI)

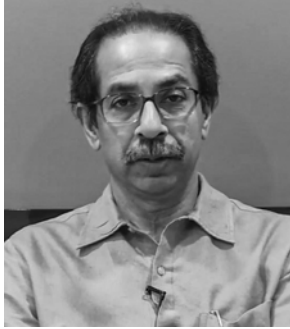
## Comprehensive plan in place to deal with terror, anti-national elements: J&K DGP

**JAMMU, SEPT 27 /--** / Amid a widespread crackdown against the Popular Front of India, Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh on Tuesday said a comprehensive plan is in place to deal with terror and anti-national elements in the country. The police chief further said action against the terror networks would definitely have a positive impact and there was no need to look at the country-wide raids from a communal angle. Singh was talking to reporters on the sidelines of the award distribution ceremony of the 11th J&K Shooting Championship, organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Rifle Association in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council and the National Rifle Association of India from September 20 to September 27 here. "There is a very comprehensive kind of plan in place to deal with terror elements and also those who are anti-national. Any action against the terror networks will weaken such groups and will definitely have a positive impact," he said. More than 150 people allegedly linked with the PFI were detained or arrested in raids across seven states on Tuesday, five days after a similar pan India crackdown against the group often accused of being linked to radical Islam. (PTI)

## Will apply 'rule of majority' principle, says CEC after SC allows EC to hear Shinde faction's 'real' Shiv Sena plea

**GANDHINAGAR, SEPT 27 /--** / Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar on Tuesday said the Election Commission of India will apply the transparent process of the "rule of majority" after the Supreme Court allowed the EC to go ahead with the hearing of Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde group's plea for recognition as the "real" Shiv Sena and allocation of the party's bow-and-arrow poll symbol to it. The CEC said the poll body has a transparent process of the "rule of majority" in place and will apply the same when looking into the case. "There is a set procedure. That procedure mandates us and we define it in terms of a very transparent process by judging and applying the 'rule of majority'. We will

allow the Election Commission to go ahead with the hearing of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde group's plea seeking



Uddhav Thackeray

asked about the apex court's order. Kumar was in Gandhinagar to review poll preparedness regarding the upcoming Gujarat Assembly elections. The Supreme Court on Tuesday

allowed the Election Commission to go ahead with the hearing of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde group's plea seeking



Eknath Shinde

recognition as the real Shiv Sena and allocation of the party's bow-and-arrow poll symbol to it. Justice D Y Chandrachud, heading a constitution bench, rejected

## Shashi Tharoor to file nomination for post of Cong prez on Sept 30

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 27 /--** / Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor will file his nomination for the Congress president's post on September 30 at 11 AM, party's central election authority chairman Madhusudan Mistry said on Tuesday, even as suspense prevailed over who would take on the Kerala MP in the polls.

Tharoor had on Monday claimed the support of party workers from across the country for his bid to get elected as AICC president. Mistry said a representative of Tharoor has informed his office that he will file his nomination papers for the post of president on September 30 at 11 AM.

The former Union minister had taken five forms and took two more later, according to Mistry. Tharoor's close aide Aalim Bansal had collected five forms from the office of the

party's central election authority chairman Mistry on the first day of the nomination process on Saturday. The Kerala MP seems set to contest the polls for the top post but it is not



Shashi Tharoor

clear who will be his electoral rival as the Rajasthan developments have put a cloud over Ashok Gehlot's candidature.

Mistry also said AICC treasurer Pawan Kumar Bansal has got nomination forms collected, adding that

it may be for someone else. Speaking with reporters at his office at the AICC headquarters here, Mistry said he met party chief Sonia Gandhi at her 10 Janpath residence on Tuesday and handed over her voter's ID card.

He also briefed Gandhi about how many people have collected the nomination forms and about the delegates. He said Bansal got the nomination forms collected from his office on Monday and it may be "as a supporter" of someone. When pressed further as to whether Bansal may have collected the forms for himself or someone else, Mistry said he cannot say for whom he has collected as it is not the procedure to ask for whom forms are being collected as any delegate can collect the forms.

According to a notification issued by the

party on Thursday, the process for filing nominations for the election will be held from September 24 to 30. The date for scrutiny of nomination papers is October 1, while the last date for withdrawal of nominations is October 8. The final list of candidates will be published at 5 pm on October 8. The polling, if needed, will be held on October 17. The counting of votes will be taken up on October 19 and the results will be declared the same day. More than 9,000 Pradesh Congress Committee delegates will vote in the poll.

The Congress last saw a contest for the party president's post in November 2000. Jitendra Prasada had lost to Sonia Gandhi in 2000 and prior to that, Sitaram Kesri had defeated Sharad Pawar and Rajesh Pilot in 1997. (PTI)

## SC issues notices to NIA, Maharashtra govt on activist Navlakha's plea for house arrest

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 27 /--** / The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought responses of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the state of Maharashtra to jailed activist Gautam Navlakha's plea that he be placed under house arrest instead of judicial custody in the Elgar-Parishad case. The 70-year-old activist has appealed to the apex court against the April 26 order of the Bombay High Court dismissing his plea for house arrest over apprehensions of lack of adequate medical and other basic facilities in Talaja jail near Mumbai where he is currently lodged. The petition came up for hearing before a bench of Justices K M Joseph and Hrishikesh Roy which issued notices to the NIA and the state seeking their responses. The bench has posted the matter for resumed hearing on September 29. The case relates to alleged inflammatory speeches made at the Elgar Parishad conclave held in Pune on December 31, 2017 which the police claimed triggered violence the next day near the Koregaon-Bhima war memorial on the outskirts of the western Maharashtra city.

The Pune police had claimed the conclave was organised by people with Maoist links. The NIA later took over the probe. During the hearing in the apex court, the counsel for Navlakha said the petitioner had moved the high court on the basis of the top court's May last year order passed on a plea by the jailed activist.

In its last year order, the apex court had expressed concern over overcrowding in jails and said it will be open for the courts to consider ordering house arrest of accused under provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code. "Based on this order, we had moved the Bombay High Court saying that I (Navlakha) in fact fulfil all the criteria that this court had laid down in this matter and please allow house arrest because I am in bad medical condition. I am 70-year-old. I have been under house arrest before as also I have no previous criminal antecedents," the counsel said.

On being asked by the court about the nature of the crime for which he has been arrested, the counsel said there are allegations about commission of offences covered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, but none of those are made out against the petitioner. The counsel said, if the apex court so directs, Navlakha can be put under house arrest in Mumbai, where his two sisters live, or in Delhi. On August 29, apex court judge Justice S Ravindra Bhat had refused from hearing Navlakha's plea. The high court had said Navlakha's apprehensions about the lack of medical aid and inadequate basic facilities at the Talaja prison, where he is currently lodged as an undertrial, were "ill-founded".

The apex court had earlier granted bail to 82-year-old activist P Varavara Rao in the case. Navlakha had told the high court the Talaja prison is overcrowded, the toilets dirty and that his medical condition deteriorated during his incarceration there.

"The case of the petitioner does not fit in any of the criteria (provided for by SC). The apprehension of the petitioner that he will not be provided medical aid and his life will be miserable in unhygienic conditions and atmosphere of the prison seems to be ill-founded," the high court had said. Navlakha had approached the high court contending the Talaja prison had poor facilities. He had claimed he was denied a chair, a pair of slippers, his spectacles, and a PG Wodehouse book by the prison superintendent. (PTI)

## Cong leaders made money in the guise of improving medical education in country before 2014: Shah

**AHMEDABAD, SEPT 27 /--** / Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday alleged instead of improving health infrastructure, Congress leaders "made money" in the name of improving medical education facilities when the party was in power before 2014. Addressing a gathering in Kalol town in Gandhinagar district, Shah said the healthcare scenario improved after Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014. "Under the Ayushman Bharat or PM-JAY scheme,

60 crore poor citizens are now getting free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh. In addition, PM Modi has also allocated Rs 64,000 crore to set up the required health infrastructure to implement that scheme. 35,000 new beds were added in hospitals across 600 districts under this scheme," said Shah. He added that a separate budget of Rs 1,600 crore has been granted to set up integrated laboratories and research centres in the country. Shah is on a two-day visit to Gujarat, where elections are due in

December this year, which began on Monday.

Earlier in the day, Shah



laid foundation stones for two hospitals - a 750-bed hospital to be managed by a

trust and another 150-bed hospital to be operated by the Employees' State Insurance Scheme, to be set up in Kalol. "What is the meaning of such infrastructure if there are no doctors in hospitals? During the Congress rule, leaders were busy making money in the name of improving medical education facilities. It was PM Modi who improved this scenario after assuming the office," the Gandhinagar MP said. Shah said 387 medical colleges, both private and government ones, were functioning in the country

in 2013-14. Their number has increased to 600 due to the efforts of the prime minister. "The number of MBBS seats has also gone up to 89,875 today against 51,348 seats in 2013-14. The number of post-graduate medical seats also increased from 31,185 to 60,202 today. This means that the number of colleges and medical seats doubled in the last eight years. Ten new AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences) have become operational, while 22 more are coming up," said Shah.

The home minister is

scheduled to inaugurate and lay the foundation stones of various projects in areas falling under his Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency. He will inaugurate an underpass in sector 15 of Gandhinagar city and also attend the ground-breaking ceremony for a Gujarat Technological University building in Lekavada village in the district. In the evening, Shah will visit his native place Mansa town in Gandhinagar to take part in the 'aarti' at Bahuchar Mata temple on the second day of Navratri. (PTI)



## Civic Chief raises traffic issues with DGP



**PORT BLAIR, SEPT 27/--/**The Chairperson, Port Blair Municipal Council, Smti. U.Kavitha on Tuesday met the Director General of Police, Mr. Neeraj Thakur at the Police Headquarters. The Civic Chief discussed various public issues pertaining to the Municipal limits and handed over a brief written representation to the DGP wherein she had briefed about the traffic congestion particularly in the areas Junglighat, Dairyfarm, BhathuBasthi up to Garacharma. The Civic Chief highlighted the issue of illegal parking, along roadsides which is the major cause of traffic congestion. The DGP after a patience hearing assured of a quick and timely action from his end. The Civic Chief also praised the DGP Andaman and Nicobar Islands for working round the clock for maintaining law and order in the Islands.

## CPI(M) State Secretary visits interior areas of North Andaman



**PORT BLAIR, SEPT 27/--/** Mr. D. Ayyappan, Secretary, CPI (M), A & N State Organising Committee addressed a series of meetings of party workers and sympathizers during his tour to North Andaman from 23rd to 25th September, 2022. He visited Tal Bagan and Paschimsagar, the remotest areas of North Andaman on 24th September 2022. At Paschimsagar, he addressed a well-attended meeting of party members and sympathizers. Addressing the meeting, he assured the villagers that the problems and issues they presented before him will be brought to the notice of the authorities concerned. At Tal Bagan also, Secretary addressed a meeting of villagers.

On 25th September, Mr. Ayyappan visited the Kalighat area and met the villagers of Kalighat, Nabagram, etc. and heard their grievances. He also attended meetings of party leaders, members and sympathizers at Kalighat. A number of problems and issues of the people were raised in these meetings by party members and sympathizers. He had also attended the meetings of CPI (M) Diglipur Area Committee on 23rd September, 2022 and Kalighat Area Committee on 25th September, 2022.

On completion of his tour, Mr. D. Ayyappan returned to Port Blair on 26th September, 2022.

## Arunachal to hand over APPSC paper leak case to CBI: CM

**ITANAGAR, SEPT 27/--/** Chief Minister Pema Khandu has said his government will hand over the probe into the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) exam paper leak case to the CBI.

The question paper of the exam for the Assistant Engineer (Civil), conducted on August 26 and August 27 by the APPSC, was leaked. Police have so far arrested five people in the case. Speaking to reporters in Ziro in Lower Subansiri district after inaugurating a slew of projects on Monday, Khandu said the state government has decided to hand over the investigation to the CBI. "The APPSC is considered to be the highest recruitment institution of the state and such kind of corruption in the recruitment process will not be tolerated," he said. (PTI)

## Blood donation camp in SantNirankariSatsangBhawan

**PORT BLAIR, SEPT 27/--/** A blood donation Camp was organised by Port Blair branch of SantNirankari Charitable Foundation (a Social Welfare Organisation of Mission) at SantNirankariSatsangBhawan on 23rd September 2022. Altogether 119 volunteers registered their names, out of them 87 donated blood with 61 male and 26 females and 32 were rejected by the medical team. The donated blood was collected by the medical team from GB Pant Hospital in association with AIDS Control Society.

The camp was inaugurated by Mr. aresh Chandra Lal, Padma Sri Awardee and Brand Ambassador of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Dr. N.R. Kodhandaram, CMO, NSFG, Deputy Director (Blood Safety) and State Nodal Officer for Mega Blood Donation Drive in Islands also spoke on importance of blood donation and its role in saving lives in emergent

cases. He also appreciated the help extended by SantNirankariMandal, Branch Port Blair during COVID-19 situation.

Rev Satya Narayan, Sector In-charge, A&N Islands thanked all the dignitaries, donors, doctors

and the medical team for their presence and support in smooth conduct of the camp. The mission till date has conducted 7359 blood donation camps in which 12,16,217 units of blood has been collected.

SantNirankari mission

in addition to spiritual development, has been regularly conducting various social welfare activities like - Blood D o n a t i o n , Sw a c h a t a A b h i y a n , forestation and tree plantation, Woman and

Child Development and empowerment and various other schemes like Eye Check-up Camps, Medical camps, extending help to civil public in case of natural disasters etc. to ensure overall development of society.

### MESSAGE

World Rabies Day is observed in these Islands on 28 September this year. It will mark the 16th World Rabies Day. This year's theme 'Rabies: One Health, Zero Deaths' highlights the deep connection between the environment and the living beings- both people and animals. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that an integrated approach to health and collaboration across sectors can minimize the loss of lives.

Rabies is a zoonotic disease and is almost invariably fatal. The infectious agent is a virus which affects the central nervous system, and the disease is dreadful due to the horrifying nature of symptoms suffered by the patient before death. Humans mostly contract the disease from rabid dogs. Globally an estimated 59,000 human rabies death occur annually in over 150 countries, with 95% of cases occurring in Africa and Asia. India accounts for 59.9% of rabies deaths in Asia and 35% of deaths globally. The spread of the disease can be prevented only through vaccinating dogs and other susceptible pets and zoo animals. Prophylaxis in humans is the only available immunization.

Rabies control programmes offer a great example for One Health implementation, and the structures and trust that underpin these are crucial for other zoonotic diseases as well, including those that are pandemic-prone.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands are one of the only regions in India which are still free from this disease. We can continue to maintain this exemplary performance in future through strict disease surveillance and the contribution of all the stakeholders. I exhort all of you to be vigilant and create pet awareness among the masses, including the pet owners.

I extend my best wishes towards the endeavour.

Sd/-  
Admiral D K Joshi (Retd.)  
Lieutenant Governor  
Andaman & Nicobar Islands

## English translation of award-winning 'Lata: Sur-Gatha' to release next Jan

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 27/--/** The English translation of the award-winning book "Lata: Sur-Gatha", on the life and times of iconic singer Lata Mangeshkar, will hit the stands early next year, announced Penguin Random House India (PRHI) on the eve of the 93rd birth anniversary of the late Bharat Ratna awardee.

"Lata: A Life in Music", originally written in Hindi by writer-poet Yatindra Mishra, is translated by noted writer and translator Ira Pande. The book has won the 64th National Film Award and the MAMI Award for Best Writing in Cinema (2016 17). "Lata di is an artist of global repute; it has been a real honour to see this well-loved and awarded book find new readers in English," said Mishra in a statement. Mishra's decade-long dialogue with Mangeshkar has resulted in a book that goes beyond the conventional and explores the lesser-known aspects of this great artist, introducing the readers to the artist as an intellectual and cultural exponent and providing a rare glimpse into the person behind the revered enigma. It is touted to be an exclusive peek into

her life -- both personal and professional. Known as the Queen of melody, Mangeshkar started training in singing at the age of five. (PTI)

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Sir Richard Steele

## Pound takes a pounding

The British currency has taken a plunge, sliding against the US dollar to touch an all-time low, fuelling concerns about the government's economic policy as the United Kingdom teeters toward recession. Some economists predict the Bank of England may call an emergency meeting as soon as this week to raise rates, to help stem a fall in the pound and calm high inflation. If so, it would come less than a week after the Bank lifted interest rates by half a percentage point to 2.25%. Market-watchers forecast that interest rates could reach 5.5% or even higher by next spring. The rate increase in September was the seventh in a row and took rates to the highest for 14 years. A further rise would increase monthly mortgage costs for millions of homeowners. If the pound stays at low levels against the dollar, imports of commodities priced in dollars, including oil and gas, will be more costly. Other imported goods could also become considerably more expensive, further pushing up inflation which is already at its highest rate for decades.

Fifteen years ago, one £1 able to buy \$2. Now, the pound is getting closer to parity with the greenback, a once-unthinkable event and a psychologically important milestone. The pound has tumbled more than 5% since the government outlined its economic plans Friday, dropping as low as \$1.0373 early Monday, before bouncing back to about \$1.08. The markets are raising the prospect that the two currencies might soon reach equal footing. A lot of the decline has been driven by the strength of the dollar, which has climbed against a wide range of other currencies as the US Federal Reserve aggressively raises rates, drawing interest from investors fleeing riskier assets. The euro, for example, has been on a similar trajectory to the pound, having fallen below parity with the dollar recently and then hitting a fresh 20-year low Monday. The pound has dropped more than most, though, because of local factors. The plummeting pound highlights what analysts are calling a tug-of-war between Britain's Treasury and the central bank, which has independence from the government to operate free of political influence. The Liz Truss government is gambling that slashing taxes and borrowing more to pay for it will kick-start economic growth as a recession looms. But, economists suggest it is unlikely the gamble will pay off. The government plans to cut 45 billion pounds (\$49 billion) in taxes as well as spend billions to help consumers and businesses struggling with high energy bills that are driving a cost-of-living crisis. The combination has sparked investor concern about spiralling government debt.

The biggest one-day drop against the US dollar since Boris Johnson announced Britain's first COVID-19 lockdown on March 18, 2020, led some to compare current events with September 16, 1992, "Black Wednesday" when a collapsing pound against the backdrop of high inflation forced the UK to crash out of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism, which was meant to stabilise exchange rates. It took the UK years to recover from the economic shock.

# Time to make employment benefits more inclusive in India

## REFLEX ACTION

Arjun Paleri and Anshu Singh

as many families do not fit this straitjacket. The court said that family relationships might take the form of unmarried domestic partnerships or queer relationships, which should be considered. Admittedly, this was just an observation made by the court while deciding a case on maternity benefits, and thus does not change the legal obligations of employers. But read with the court's judgments on the rights of transgender persons, the decriminalisation of same-sex relationships and the recognition of the rights of live-in partners, it clearly shows the direction in which the law is evolving in India.

A quick look at the legal landscape of the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe shows that in all these jurisdictions, the definition of family for the purpose of employee benefits has been widened, and the benefits available to the heterosexual spouse of an employee are mostly also available to a same-sex spouse or a live-in partner. Anything less may be considered discrimination and thus declared illegal. Even if the legal mandate in these jurisdictions does not prescribe inclusionary practices, the employers, under their DE&I policies, are invariably accepting practices which try to make the workplace more inclusive by not questioning the personal choices of employees regarding family, and extending the benefits like medical insurance and parental benefits in a non-discriminatory manner.

With changing times, more and more people are accepting and embracing their identities which may not conform to the traditionally accepted mores of society. Thus, not providing benefits to employees with personal choices that do not conform to traditional

notions of society takes away the sense of belonging from employees, leading to unhappy employees and higher attrition rates. Though there is no statutory requirement for accepting a broader meaning of meaning and extending the benefits, the law also does not restrict employers from taking this approach. Using a broader definition of family and thus expanding the scope of employee benefits will make the company more attractive, and thus help hire and retain talent from a more comprehensive set of people. Several recent surveys show that job seekers prefer companies with inclusive policies and a diverse workforce.

Moreover, a diverse and well-managed workforce with varied experiences and inputs will increase the productivity and, thus, the profitability of the company. A diverse workforce will help the company understand and connect with customers from different backgrounds, thus leading to the promotion of business. It may also make the company more attractive to prospective clients in places like the U.S., Europe and the U.K., where an inclusive workplace is fast becoming a business requirement.

Small changes like allowing medical insurance for a same-sex spouse or live-in partner will not be a significant additional burden on the employer but go a long way in ensuring that employees from different identity groups do not consider themselves out of place. It may also reduce the unconscious workplace bias against these employees by sending out the message that there is nothing unacceptable in their personal choices and that the employer considers them on par with other employees.

Positive social change is the buzzword that most businesses use and try to associate with. Treating their employees with different personal choices fairly by taking small measures will go a long way in creating this positive social change without additional costs. (IPA)



Crowds throng Lighthouse Cinema & New Market crossing in central Kolkata for last minute puja shopping --Arijit Ganguly

## Gehlot starts as winning candidate in Cong Presidential Poll

Shashi Tharoor and Ashok Gehlot will contest the Congress president's post election and Tharoor will walk into it already sidelined. Gandhi family loyalist Ashok Gehlot is naturally a hot favourite. Tharoor is not going to get the advantage of being fellow Kerala MP to Rahul Gandhi. In fact, if a poll to choose between who is more popular in Kerala, "Rahul Gandhi or Shashi Tharoor?", is held, "The Tharoor" will lose by a thickset margin!

Even the fawning ladies of Thiruvananthapuram, Tharoor's parliamentary constituency which he won thrice, will vote en masse for the Gandhi scion, and Tharoor's suave profile will be floating in Kerala's backwaters. Come to think of it, Tharoor's playboy image is being raked up by vested interests to paint him in unfavourable colours. Gehlot's cohorts don't want to take any chances.

The north-based "national media" is also in Gehlot's corner. Certain popular Hindi news television channels, which have no affinity with the English-loquacious Tharoor, have assigned journalists to Gehlot, following him around, and capturing him in favourable poses. The Congress, like the Bharatiya Janata Party, also has a distinct north Indian pedigree.

Shashi Tharoor may have got interim Congress president Sonia Gandhi's permission to contest, but that does not make him the chosen one. Gehlot, the "outgoing" Rajasthan chief minister, will be crowned Congress president come the day.

It wouldn't be a surprise if Tharoor withdraws from the race except that now there's a third candidate also in the fray! Gehlot supporters have been issuing statements that Gehlot will contest provided "no one from the Nehru-Gandhi family" wants to be party president. Of course, the Gandhis want an election.

And Malayalis make excellent sacrificial lambs. For some unfathomable reasons, Malayalis have been serving the Nehru-Gandhi family from even before Independence. The Malayali has always been more loyal than the king to the Nehru-Gandhi family. Jawaharlal Nehru had his "own Malayali"; Indira Gandhi, too. Also, Rajiv Gandhi. Sonia Gandhi?

In fact, the Gandhi family history is

replete with Malayali personal aides. There are a number of Malayalis in Rahul Gandhi's staff. Of them, KC Venugopal has a special place. And when the Gandhi family takes a vacation, it's mostly in or around God's Own Country. Lakshadweep, off the coast of Kerala, used to be Rajiv Gandhi's favourite.

Rahul Gandhi on September 22 left no doubts as to who he favoured, at least on paper. Rahul gave a broad hint to Gehlot, saying he cannot be both Congress president and Rajasthan Chief Minister! No such broad hints for Shashi Tharoor though none so broad than the unspoken one that he took the hint and quit the race.

So a contest that is not a contest! This will be only the fifth time a contest in Congress's 137-year-old history. The last time was when Sonia Gandhi defeated Jitendra Prasad in 2000. Rahul Gandhi was thrust on the party. This time it is the turn of Ashok Gehlot to be thrust. The last non-Gandhi Congress president was Sitaram Kesri, and he

wasn't a Gandhi-pick. Ashok Gehlot is out and out a Gandhi-pick. Gehlot met Sonia on August 23, the day before she went abroad. And since then, he has been "following" Rahul Gandhi. He was in Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu when Rahul launched Bharat Jodo Yatra. And, he was in the chartered flight that brought Rahul to Delhi on September 23.

Clearly, it is not hard to guess who the Gandhis want to be party president? Gehlot is a Nehru-Gandhi loyalist. He is not G-23. He was in the thick of the protests when the ED questioned Sonia and Rahul. He defended Sonia and Rahul in the press. Shashi Tharoor wasn't to be seen at all. Most important, Tharoor signed the G-23 letter to Sonia. Shashi Tharoor is a dissenter, a sophisticated dissenter. Tharoor wants inner-party reforms. Tharoor also wants the electoral rolls for the Congress president's election made public.

Gehlot has no such demands. A total of 9000 delegates will vote in the election. That will include Sachin Pilot and his supporters. Pilot can't wait to see Ashok Gehlot become Congress President. Pilot can't wait to replace Ashok Gehlot as Rajasthan Chief Minister! Shashi Tharoor will have to settle for the "Most Attractive MP" title! (IPA)

Conventional Crossword												
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25				26								

ACROSS						DOWN					
1	Disorderly noise	1	Measures of length			2	Dwellings				
5	Large	7	Like a weak old woman			3	Like a weak old woman				
7	At no time					4	Cult				
8	Foreign-looking					5	Seek charity				
10	Precious stone					6	Wrath				
12	Blockhead					9	Playthings				
13	Optic					11	Cut grass				
14	Not fast					14	Dips in liquid				
16	Church service					15	One granted a lease				
17	Enemy					16	Cleaning implement				
18	Fruit seeds					17	Wicked person				
20	Mild explosion					18	Excuse				
23	Instructive example					19	Joint				
24	Worked into a fabric					21	Night bird				
25	Of advanced age					22	School of whales				
26	Stick										

SUDOKU :3653												
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Yesterday's Solution 3652												
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Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1661												
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### DISCLAIMER

The views in the articles published here are absolutely the views of the author and The Echo of India does not stand liable for them.







## Over 150 people allegedly linked With PFI arrested across 7 states in fresh crackdown

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 27** /--/ More than 150 people allegedly linked with the Popular Front of India (PFI) were detained or arrested in raids across seven states on Tuesday, five days after a similar pan India crackdown against the group often accused of being linked to radical Islam. Conducted mostly by state police teams, the raids were spread across Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Delhi, Maharashtra, Assam and Madhya Pradesh. As police teams fanned out across their respective states on Tuesday, seemingly synchronised, the action was swift. While 25 people were arrested in Assam, 10 were arrested in Maharashtra and 57 detained in Uttar Pradesh, officials said. The count of those detained in Delhi was 30, Madhya Pradesh was at 21 followed by 10 in Gujarat. Besides, several people were also arrested in Karnataka.

In Uttar Pradesh, the raids across 26 districts were jointly carried out by the Anti Terrorist Squad, Special Task Force and the local police simultaneously. Documents and evidence were collected, Additional Director General (law and order) Prashant Kumar said. Further action will be taken based on the evidence collected, Kumar said while adding that 57 people were taken into custody. There was no immediate reaction from the PFI, which was formed in 2006 and claims to strive for a neo-social movement ostensibly for the empowerment of marginalised sections of India. It is, however, often accused by law enforcement agencies of promoting radical Islam. The organisation was formed in Kerala and is headquartered in Delhi. Following the crackdowns, the PFI stares at a possible countrywide ban. According to officials in Assam, of the 25 PFI activists arrested in the fresh crackdown, 10 were held in Goalpara. Besides, five were nabbed in Kamrup (Rural) and three in Dhubri, followed by arrests in Barpeta, Baksa, Darrang, Udalguri and Karimganj. Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had earlier said his government has been urging the Centre to ban the outfit for allegedly creating an eco-system for terror activities. In the national capital, Delhi



**Aneesh, an accused detained during a raid by Special Cell of the Delhi police for his alleged association with PFI, being taken to a police station, in New Delhi**

Police's Special Cell carried out the searches in multiple locations, including Nizamuddin and Shaheen Bagh. "We have conducted raids at multiple locations in the national capital, including Shaheen Bagh and Nizamuddin. So far, we have detained 30 people associated with the PFI," a senior police officer said. Paramilitary forces were deployed in several places in the city where the raids were conducted. "We have taken preventive measures and as part of it, we have deployed paramilitary forces in respective areas of the districts to ensure law and order situation and maintain peace and tranquility in the area," a senior police official said. No case has been registered as the investigation is underway, police said. The operation started on Tuesday

after 12.30 am continued till early morning, police said. The Madhya Pradesh Police detained 21 people from eight districts for their links with the PFI, state home minister Narottam Mishra said. These people were detained on the basis of interrogation of the PFI activists arrested last week, Mishra, who is also the Madhya Pradesh government's spokesperson, said. In Gujarat, at least 10 people were detained from different parts of the state in raids conducted by a joint team of the state Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the NIA. "They have detained at least 10 people for questioning from different parts of Gujarat with the help of the state police and ATS," an official in Ahmedabad said. The PFI's political wing Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) opened an office in Ahmedabad a few months back.

In southern Karnataka, officials said several PFI leaders were detained in urban and rural areas of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts early in the morning. PFI leaders were taken into custody from Mangaluru, Ullal, Talapady and other areas in DK district. Preventive detention cases have been filed against them under sections 107 and 151 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) against the detained leaders, police sources said. Besides, five PFI leaders were taken into custody by the Udupi district police in raids conducted in their houses. Sources said raids were conducted at Hoode, Gangolli, Byndoor and Adi Udupi. The police department has been monitoring the activities of the detained leaders for the past six months and they have been taken into custody to prevent any untoward incident, sources added.

And in Maharashtra, four activists were arrested from different locations in Maharashtra's Thane district and six in Pune. Giving details of the Thane arrests, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Laxmikant Patil said two of the activists were nabbed from Mumbra and one each from Kalyan and Bhiwandi towns. He did not elaborate. The ATS on Monday told a court in Mumbai that it wanted to probe the links of five of the 20 people arrested last week with organisations including Al Qaeda and the Islamic State and also investigate electronic evidence. (PTI)

## Rajasthan crisis: Cong observers submit report to Sonia, recommend disciplinary action against 3 Gehlot loyalists

### Sachin Pilot's arrival in Delhi fuels speculation

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 27** /--/ Congress observers for Rajasthan on Tuesday recommended disciplinary action against three party leaders, including two ministers, for the crisis in the state, but did not seek any action against chief minister Ashok Gehlot. The three Gehlot loyalists against whom action has been recommended are cabinet minister Shanti Dhariwal, Minister and Congress Chief Whip in the Assembly Mahesh Joshi, and MLA Dharmendra Rathore. The observers - Mallikarjun Kharge and Ajay Maken - submitted their report to party chief Sonia Gandhi Tuesday



evening, flagging "gross indiscipline" on the part of some leaders who organised a parallel meet of MLAs instead of joining a Congress Legislature Party meeting. The two observers had to return from Jaipur without holding the CLP meeting as a large group of MLAs considered loyal to chief minister Gehlot refused to join it and put forth certain conditions for the selection of Gehlot's successor.

The sources said the report has not sought any action against Gehlot even as it recommended action against three of his loyalists. However, it has pointed out that the parallel meeting of MLAs was

held with Gehlot's knowledge. The Congress observers' report pointed to the "gross indiscipline" on the part of some Rajasthan leaders who organised the parallel meet of MLAs and did not allow the CLP meeting to take place. The report came a day after the observers briefed Sonia Gandhi on the developments and she had asked them to submit a written report. Meanwhile, senior Congress leader and former Rajasthan deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot arrived in the national capital on Tuesday amid a buzz of a likely meeting with the party high command that is grappling with the high political drama in the state. However, there was no confirmation about his schedule here with sources close to him saying that no meetings were fixed so far. Pilot's visit comes a day after Kharge and Maken, the two Congress observers for Rajasthan, briefed party president Sonia Gandhi about the political crisis in the party's state unit. The Congress in Rajasthan plunged into a crisis on Sunday as several MLAs loyal to Gehlot resigned over a possible move to appoint Pilot as his successor, their rebellion erupting just ahead of a CLP meeting. The Gehlot loyalists have been vocal in their attack against Pilot and Maken with Rajasthan minister Shanti Dhariwal on Monday alleging that the party general secretary in charge was involved in a conspiracy to remove Gehlot as chief minister and was canvassing for the former deputy chief minister. However, the Pilot camp has kept quiet and is waiting for a decision by the Congress high command. (PTI)



**Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida. The Prime Minister extended his deepest condolences on the untimely demise of former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe**

**TOKYO, SEPT 27** /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday met with Akie Abe, the widow of slain former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe, at the Akasaka Palace here and conveyed his heartfelt condolences on the tragic loss. Modi, who is here to attend the state funeral of the Japanese leader, earlier joined several global leaders to pay floral tribute to Abe who reshaped Japan's foreign policy, including setting out a bold vision for a quantum leap in ties with India. The event at the Nippon Budokan, Tokyo was attended by representatives from over 100 countries, including more than 20 heads of state and governments.

Following the state funeral, Prime Minister Modi had a private meeting with Akie Abe at the Akasaka Palace. "Met Mrs. Akie Abe and conveyed my condolences on the passing away of Mr. Shinzo Abe. His contribution towards Japan's progress and his role in furthering global prosperity will never be forgotten," Modi tweeted. In a statement, the ministry of external affairs said the Prime Minister honoured the memory of former premier Abe, who he considered a dear friend and a great champion of India-Japan partnership. "Prime Minister Modi conveyed his heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Abe. He recalled his fond friendship

## LOCAL NEWS

## CS launches e-bus services at SwarajDweep



**PORT BLAIR, SEPT 27** /--/ The Chief Secretary, Mr Keshav Chandra, during his visit to SwarajDweep flagged off five e-buses of Transport Department, A&N Administration on Monday. This initiative is an effort of A&N Administration towards environment protection and preservation of SwarajDweep's scenic natural beauty.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Secretary while congratulating the transport department for launching the e-bus services in SwarajDweep said that his will provide tourists visiting SwarajDweep a pleasant and memorable stay, the Chief Secretary stated. He said, there have been instances of travel agents fleecing tourists as there is no alternate mode of conveyance and reminded the habitants of the Island that SwarajDweep being a tourist destination have visitors from not just the country, but international tourists too, hence it is pertinent to ensure that tourists visiting the Island are provided with basic needs in terms of comfortable mode of transportation, stay, etc. The Chief Secretary remarked that in the coming days, more tourists and activities will be introduced in SwarajDweep, however, we need to be sensitive towards the fragile environment and must do our bit to protect, preserve and conserve it while we simultaneously open our doors for tourism activities. He said, the Administration's commitment to promote sustainable and responsible tourism in A&N Islands can only be achieved, if the local inhabitants join hands in achieving this vision. The Chief Secretary also informed the gathering that the pending work for Sea Port terminal will be expedited and it is the endeavor of A&N Administration to provide visitors/ tourists with the required facilities/ infrastructure to make their visit to SwarajDweep a comfortable one. "Our approach towards tourists and our service towards them speaks volume and we must strive to provide them the best we can so that they in turn can become ambassadors of our tourism industry through which more & more tourists would like to visit the Island", the Chief Secretary said. The creation

of cycling tracks for those who are fond of cycling needs to be maintained well and it is the responsibility of the general public to ensure their upkeep, said the Chief Secretary. Nature's beauty in SwarajDweep is beyond comparison and hence, we must strive to protect and preserve it and create a global brand of sustainable tourism, the Chief Secretary remarked urging all the inhabitants of the Island to ensure they continue to be sensitive towards the environment while they go about their livelihood activities. He concluded by assuring the residents of SwarajDweep that in the next visit, the issues discussed and its progress will be reviewed.

In his address, the Commissioner-cum-Secretary (Transport), Shri Nikhil Kumar said, the introduction of e-buses is a step towards the initiative of preserving the ecology of the Island. It will prove to be a boon to the environment, as Govt. is promoting a clean & green mode of transport. He also informed about the benefit of e-buses as it has zero tail emissions and it is environmentally friendly. The e-buses have AC with 33 seats and will provide service from 6.30 am to 8.30 pm with specific route demarcation i.e. from the Jetty to Kalapathar and Radhanagar. The service will be available every half an hour. This initiative will give a huge fillip to the transport sector in Isles, said the Commissioner. Apart from e-buses, the existing STS bus services will also continue, he said and called upon the habitants of the Islands to make best use of the facility and also to simultaneously protect and preserve the pristine environment of SwarajDweep.

Earlier, welcoming the gathering, the Secretary, Transport, Shri Vishwendra thanked the Chief Secretary for his guidance and support in materializing this initiative of introducing e-buses facility at SwarajDweep. He also thanked Secretaries of all Departments for their fervent support. The programme concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by Deputy Director (Transport), Shri B. Binoy. The students of GSSS, SwarajDweep presented a welcome song on the occasion.

## Showcasing Barren...

From page-1 After the introduction of new cruise liners by private players with the capacity to travel to such locations, the tourism industry is once again hopeful of revival of this circuit. This will help the tourism industry in bouncing back from the impact of the pandemic which had already broken the backbone of tourism in these islands. The ship used to reach Barren Island by early morning hours so that the tourists could enjoy the scenic beauty of erupting volcano during sunrise. The ship returned by late afternoon by giving the travellers a lifetime experience. This new tourist circuit was a hit among the tourists. Many locals also avail this facility regularly. Later on, this service was withdrawn without any notice.

## Nature camp on 'Biodiversity

From page-1 Students of GSSS Karmatang participated in the camp, including a trip through Nature trail creating awareness about the importance of conserving biodiversity, importance of various ecosystems like Mangroves. The children were also given information about crocodiles and turtle nesting. The trip also included a visit to an interpretation center at the beach and awareness about the importance of protecting and preserving the wealth and species habitats ecosystem & genetic diversity in the plants. The programme ended with interaction with the students, including a quiz competition.

## Modi conveys heartfelt condolences to Abe's widow on tragic loss

**TOKYO, SEPT 27** /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday met with Akie Abe, the widow of slain former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe, at the Akasaka Palace here and conveyed his heartfelt condolences on the tragic loss. Modi, who is here to attend the state funeral of the Japanese leader, earlier joined several global leaders to pay floral tribute to Abe who reshaped Japan's foreign policy, including setting out a bold vision for a quantum leap in ties with India. The event at the Nippon Budokan, Tokyo was attended by representatives from over 100 countries, including more than 20 heads of state and governments.

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and the significant contribution made by former PM Abe in taking India-Japan relationship to new heights," the statement added. The Prime Minister also had a brief interaction thereafter with Prime Minister Kishida to reiterate his condolences, the ministry said. Earlier in the morning, Modi met Kishida ahead of the state funeral and conveyed his deepest condolences over the tragic demise of Abe, lauding his contributions in strengthening the bilateral strategic partnership as well in conceptualising the vision of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. "I am feeling very sad about the sudden death of former

premier Abe... He took Japan-India relations to a greater level and also expanded it in many areas," Modi, who shared a close friendship with the slain Japanese leader, said. The Prime Minister recalled that when he visited Japan last time, he had a long conversation with Abe. "India is missing Shinzo Abe," he added. "When I was in Tokyo earlier this year, little did I imagine I would be back for the solemn programme of former PM Abe's state funeral. He was a great leader, a phenomenal individual and someone who believed in India-Japan friendship. He shall live on in the hearts of millions!" Modi tweeted. (PTI)



# British pound stabilizes, but turmoil still roils UK economy

**LONDON, SEPT 27** /--/The British pound stabilized Tuesday as UK authorities tried to ease investor concerns after the biggest tax cuts in 50 years sent the currency tumbling to a record low the previous day.

The turmoil is already having real-world effects, with several British mortgage lenders pulling offers from the market amid expectations the Bank of England will sharply boost interest rates to offset the inflationary impact of the pound's recent slide.

It was trading at around 1.08 on Tuesday, after plunging as low as 1.0373 early Monday. The British

currency is still down 4% since Friday, when Treasury chief Kwasi Kwarteng announced plans for 45 billion pounds ( 49 billion) of unfunded tax cuts. The pound has fallen 20% against the dollar this year. Kwarteng's announcement, which comes at the same time the government plans to borrow billions to help shield homes and businesses from soaring energy prices, sparked concerns that the new government's policies would swell government debt and further fuel inflation.

Late Monday, the central bank said it was closely

monitoring" financial markets and was prepared to boost interest rates as much as needed to curb inflation, which is already running at 9.9%, the highest among major economies. The bank's Monetary Policy Committee isn't scheduled to meet until Nov 3.

There is no rate increase today and speculators will enjoy the prospect of two months of Bank of England inactivity if the statement is taken at face value, said Alastair George, chief investment strategist at Edison Group.

The UK Treasury also sought to reassure investors, saying it would set out a

more detailed fiscal plan and independent analysis from the Office for Budget Responsibility on Nov. 23.

That did little to quiet criticism of the government's policies.

Lawrence Summers, who served as US Treasury secretary under Bill Clinton, said he was surprised that the International Monetary Fund hadn't spoken out because a currency crisis in Britain could have worldwide consequences and affect London's viability as a global financial centre.

I was very pessimistic about the consequences of utterly irresponsible U.K.

policy on Friday, Summers tweeted Tuesday. But, I did not expect markets to get so bad so fast.

Kwarteng and Prime Minister Liz Truss, who replaced Boris Johnson as prime minister on Sept. 6, are betting that lower taxes and reduced bureaucracy eventually will generate enough additional revenue to pay for the tax cuts announced Friday. But many economists say it is unlikely the gamble will pay off. Torsten Bell, who heads the Resolution Foundation, a think tank focused on economic inequality, said the markets were looking at the

government's plans and saying that is not what serious policymaking looks like. Market reaction to Friday's announcement will hurt consumers by fueling inflation in the short term, leading to higher mortgage payments in the medium term, and boosting government borrowing in the long term, the foundation said Monday.

The world we are heading for is a bumpy few weeks, Bell told Sky News. Kwarteng is now going to have quite a tough time because he has now set out plans to balance the books in November. That is going to be very hard. (AP)

## Italy gets new tranche of EU funds as dust settles from vote

**ROME, SEPT 27** /--/The European Commission signed off Tuesday on the next 21-billion-euro (20.2 billion) tranche of Italy's pandemic recovery funds, a welcome infusion that comes amid questions about whether Giorgia Meloni and her euroskeptic party, which won the national election, will be able to keep the funding coming. The outgoing government of Premier Mario Draghi, a former European Central Bank chief, secured the funds after having achieved 45 milestones required by Brussels to receive the money. They included enacting reforms of public administration, education and health care, and investments in technology, research, tourism and culture.

A first allotment of 21 billion euros, also tied to reforms and investments, was transferred to Italy in April. Italy received the largest share of the European Union's recovery fund, around 191.5 billion euros ( 185 billion), since it was the European country hardest hit financially by the pandemic's first wave, when the government shuttered nonessential industry. Draghi made hitting the EU-mandated milestones a hallmark of his 18-month national unity government, which collapsed in July when key allies boycotted a confidence vote. Meloni's Brothers of Italy, which has its roots in a neo-fascist party and campaigned on a nationalist programme, won 26% of the vote. It is poised to lead a centre-right coalition government alongside the anti-immigrant League with roots in Italy's productive north and the Forza Italia party of ex-Premier Silvio Berlusconi.

Meloni's victory lurched Italy, a founding member of the EU and its third-largest economy, sharply to the far-right, and was cheered by other euroskeptic leaders in France and Spain who have also made electoral gains in recent months. Italy has in the past failed to capture all EU funding allocated to it, raising concerns over whether Meloni's inexperience in government would hamper Italy going forward, especially given that Draghi's solid reputation in Brussels was so crucial to the country being awarded so much. The EU funds helped propel Italy to 6% growth last year, which is slowing to around 3% this year with the impact of inflation and high energy costs.

Obviously, paying the debt is the priority, but mostly now the focus is going to be toward this next generation EU plan, whether Italy is going to fulfill the plan and all the reforms, said Pierpaolo Benigno, professor of Economics at University of Bern. The market is going to watch all the progress towards this fulfilment.

Agnese Ortolani, senior analyst at the Economist Intelligence Unit, said she expected a Meloni-led government would do what it takes to get the next tranche, of 19 billion euros ( 18.3 billion). Despite some internal disagreements, the right-wing coalition committed to adhere to the NRRP in its electoral manifesto, with some revisions to adapt the plan to the new economic context of the energy and cost-of-living crises, she said in a note, referring to the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. Meloni's political opponents have protested her plans to reallocate some of the EU's Next Generation euro funds, but analysts are less alarmed. This is par for the course,? said Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg.

The EU may be open to some changes as to how the money is used as long as Meloni implements the modest pro-growth reforms the EU demands as a precondition. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the new approved funding was evidence that Brussels believed Italy had made good progress in its promised reforms. Von der Leyen, who in recent days issued a veiled warning against any democratic backsliding in Italy under a far-right leadership, encouraged further work. "So congratulations, Italia, and keep up the good work! The Commission stands by you on your way to recovery, she said in a statement. (AP)

## Pop singer Shakira to face trial over tax fraud in Spain

**BARCELONA, SEPT 27** /--/A Spanish judge on Tuesday approved a trial for Colombian pop singer Shakira on charges of tax fraud.

Spanish prosecutors accused the entertainer in 2018 of failing to pay 14.5 million euros ( 13.9 million) in taxes on income earned between 2012 and 2014.

Prosecutors are seeking an eight-year prison sentence and a hefty fine if she is found guilty of tax evasion.

Shakira, 45, has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing and rejected a deal with authorities to avoid going to trial.

Her public relations firm has said that she has already paid all that she owed and an additional 3 million euros ( 2.8 million) in interest.

The court based in the town of Esplugues de Llobregat near Barcelona said that Shakira will face six counts of tax fraud.

The date for the trial has yet to be set.

The case hinges on where Shakira lived during 2012-14. Prosecutors in Barcelona have alleged the Grammy winner spent more than half of that period in Spain and should have paid taxes in the country, even though her official residence was in the Bahamas.

Shakira, whose full name is Shakira Isabel Mebarak Ripoll, has been linked to Spain since she started dating soccer player Gerard Pique.

The couple, who have two children, used to live together in Barcelona but recently ended their 11-year relationship.

Spain has cracked down on soccer stars like Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo over the past decade for not paying their full due in taxes.

They were found guilty of evasion but both avoided prison time thanks to a provision that allows a judge to waive sentences under two years in length for first-time offenders. (AP)



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meeting US Secretary of Defence Llyod J Austin in Washington DC

## Rishi Sunak supporters speak out as UK economy spirals under Liz Truss

**LONDON, SEPT 27** /--/The supporters of Rishi Sunak in the Conservative Party leadership race, which concluded earlier this month with opponent Liz Truss as British Prime Minister, are increasingly speaking out to point out that the Indian-origin former Chancellor had warned against much of economic turmoil unleashed by the new incumbent at 10 Downing Street.

While Sunak himself has remained conspicuously silent, his backers within the governing party and also more neutral sections of the media have been highlighting how so-called Trussonomics of tax cuts and higher borrowing has spooked the markets worldwide and sent the Pound Sterling tumbling against the dollar. Come back Rishi Sunak, all is forgiven, reads an editorial in The Daily Telegraph on Tuesday.

During the Tory leadership contest, the former Chancellor warned that Liz Truss' plan to borrow to fund

tax cuts were dangerous' and risked making everything worse'. And, lo, his prophecy, dismissed as doomsterism at the time, has already come to



Rishi Sunak

pass, it said.

Some of Sunak's parliamentary colleagues also point out exactly that prophetic stance of Britain's first Indian-origin contender for the top job at 10 Downing Street.

Huw Merriman, a Tory MP who chairs the House of

Commons Transport Select Committee and a prominent ally of Sunak during the eight-week-long leadership election campaign, took to Twitter in response to a new YouGov poll in The Times' showing the Opposition Labour Party race ahead with its biggest lead in over a decade at 17 points over the governing party.

Those of us who backed Rishi Sunak lost the contest but this poll suggests that the victor is losing our voters with policies we warned against, said Merriman.

For the good of our country, and the livelihoods of everyone in our country, I still hope to be proven wrong, he said. In a BBC interview last month on the campaign trail, Sunak had reiterated his policy plank of a measured approach to tax cuts and offering targeted financial help to the most vulnerable to address the cost-of-living crisis.

Liz's plans are promising the earth to everybody. I

don't think you can have your cake and eat it. I don't think life is that simple, and I think her plan risks making everything worse, he said at the time.

With reference to some of these warnings, Lord Gavin Barwell, who was Downing Street chief of staff for former Prime Minister Theresa May, said this week: I think people are pretty furious with those who acted as cheerleaders for the government's policy when many, not least Rishi Sunak, warned exactly what the consequences would be.

The reaction follows the much-hyped mini-budget tabled by Truss' new Chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng, in the House of Commons on Friday.

It has since seen the cost of borrowing soar as the financial markets reacted adversely to the announcement of the biggest tax cuts for 50 years to be paid for by additional government borrowing. (PTI)

## Meta disables Russian propaganda network targeting Europe

**MENLO PARK (US), SEP 27** /--/A sprawling disinformation network originating in Russia sought to use hundreds of fake social media accounts and dozens of sham news websites to spread Kremlin talking points about the invasion of Ukraine, Meta revealed Tuesday. The company, which owns Facebook and Instagram, said it identified and disabled the operation before it was able to gain a large audience. Nonetheless, Facebook said it was the largest and most complex Russian propaganda effort that it has found since the invasion began.

The operation involved more than 60 websites created to mimic legitimate news sites including The Guardian newspaper in the United Kingdom and Germany's Der Spiegel. Instead of the actual news reported by those outlets, however, the fake sites contained links to Russian propaganda and disinformation about Ukraine. More than 1,600 fake Facebook accounts were used to spread the propaganda to audiences in Germany, Italy, France, the U.K. and Ukraine. The findings highlighted both the promise of



social media companies to police their sites and the peril that disinformation continues to pose.

Video: False Staging in Bucha Revealed! claimed one of the fake news stories, which blamed Ukraine for the slaughter of hundreds of Ukrainians in a town occupied by the Russians. The fake social media accounts were then used to spread links to the fake news stories and other pro-Russian posts and videos on Facebook and Instagram, as well as platforms including Telegram and Twitter.

The network was active throughout the summer. On a few occasions, the operation's content was amplified by the official Facebook pages of Russian embassies in Europe and Asia, said David Agranovich, Meta's director of threat disruption.

I think this is probably the largest and most complex Russian-origin operation that we've disrupted since the beginning of the war in Ukraine earlier this year."

The network's activities were first noticed by investigative reporters in Germany. When Meta began its investigation it found that many of the fake accounts had already been removed by Facebook's automated systems.

Thousands of people were following the network's Facebook pages when they were deactivated earlier this year. Researchers said they couldn't directly attribute the network to the Russian government. But Agranovich noted the role played by Russian diplomats and said the operation relied on some sophisticated tactics, including the use of multiple languages and carefully constructed imposter websites.

Since the war began in February, the Kremlin has used online disinformation and conspiracy theories in an effort to weaken international support for Ukraine.

Groups linked to the Russian government have accused Ukraine of staging attacks, blamed the war on baseless allegations of U.S. bioweapon development and portrayed Ukrainian refugees as criminals and rapists. Social media platforms and European governments have tried to stifle the Kremlin's propaganda and disinformation, only to see Russia shift tactics. A message sent to the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C., asking for a response to Meta's recent actions was not immediately returned.

Researchers at Meta Platforms Inc., which is based in Menlo Park, California, also exposed a much smaller network that originated in China and attempted to spread divisive political content in the U.S. The operation reached only a tiny U.S. audience, with some posts receiving just a single engagement. The posts also made some amateurish moves that showed they weren't American, including some clumsy English language mistakes and a habit of posting during Chinese working hours.

Despite its ineffectiveness, the network is notable because it's the first identified by Meta that targeted Americans with political messages ahead of this year's midterm elections. The Chinese posts didn't support one party or the other but seemed intent on stirring up polarisation. While it failed, it's important because it's a new direction for Chinese disinformation operations, said Ben Nimmo, who directs global threat intelligence for Meta. (AP)

## Leaks on Russian gas pipelines raise concerns about sabotage

**WARSHAW, SEPT 27** /--/A series of unusual leaks on two natural gas pipelines running from Russia under the Baltic Sea to Germany triggered concerns about possible sabotage on Tuesday, overshadowing the inauguration of a long-awaited pipeline in Poland that will bring Norwegian gas to Europe in efforts to bolster energy independence from Moscow.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said she cannot rule out sabotage after three leaks were detected over the past day on Nord Stream 1 and 2.

The pipelines are not bringing gas to Europe as an energy standoff over Russia's war in Ukraine halted flows or never allowed them to begin. However, gas still fills the lines. Frederiksen joined Poland's President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki in opening a valve of a yellow pipe belonging to the Baltic Pipe, a new system that will bring Norway's gas across Denmark and the Baltic Sea to Poland.

No official presented evidence of what caused the problems, but in central

Europe where distrust of Russia runs high, there were fears that Moscow sabotaged its own infrastructure in a gesture of spite or to signal that all pipelines are vulnerable to attack.

The leaks emerged off the coast of Denmark and Sweden, raising the stakes on whether energy infrastructure in European waters was being targeted and leading to a small bump in natural gas prices.

A Polish government official said he would not rule out the possibility of Russian provocations.

I cannot exclude any scenario. We are in a situation of high international tension, said Marcin Przydacz, a deputy foreign minister. Unfortunately, our eastern neighbour is pursuing an aggressive policy all the time. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called the leaks very alarming. This is an unprecedented situation that requires an urgent investigation. We are extremely worried by this news, he said in a conference call with reporters.

Asked if the accident may have been caused by

an act of sabotage, Peskov said that no version could be excluded.

Because the pipelines aren't actively sending gas to Europe, the leaks did not pose any threat to energy supplies, and experts said the environmental impact would be limited.

With the continent needing gas to heat homes, generate electricity and run factories, the energy crisis provoked by Russia's war in

receiving Russian gas. Therefore, the gas leaks do not fundamentally change the situation.

Polish energy expert Andrzej Sikora said he has been warning of the possibility of attacks on the infrastructure since the construction of Nord Stream 1 in 2010.

The significant drop in pressure caused by the leaks was clearly not the result of a bad weld, said



Ukraine threatens rationing, business shutdowns and possible recession this winter. It was highly unusual for gas leaks like this to happen, said Kristian Rune Poulsen, energy analyst at Green Power Denmark. But the market has long been set on us not

Sikora, head of the Energy Studies Institute think tank.

Danish authorities said on Monday that a leak was detected in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which has never been used.

They later announced a major pressure drop on the parallel Nord Stream 1,

which until recently has been a key source of gas to Germany.

The Swedish Maritime Administration said on Tuesday that two leaks were discovered on Nord Stream 1, which partly runs in Swedish waters. Danish authorities also have confirmed the leaks.

The Danish Maritime Authority issued a navigation warning and established a prohibited area to ensure that ships do not go near the leaks. Swedish authorities sent out similar warnings.

The leaks in the pipelines have been detected northeast and southeast of the Danish island of Bornholm.

The pipelines have been at the centre of an energy war between Europe and Russia since the invasion of Ukraine in late February. A plunge in Russian gas supplies has caused energy prices to soar, pressuring governments to help ease the pain of sky-high gas and electric bills for households and businesses as winter nears. European countries have been struggling to find other sources of gas.

Poland, for example, was already on track to free itself of Russian gas after working for years to find other sources, including imports of liquefied natural gas, or LNG, from the United States and Middle East. Germany, in contrast, is only now racing to quickly build LNG terminals.

Baltic Pipe is a prominent project in the bid for energy security and is to start bringing Norwegian gas through Denmark and along the Baltic Sea to Poland on October 1.

Sikora, the Polish energy analyst, has been urging steps to ensure the security of the Baltic Pipe, which at one point crosses paths with both Nord Stream pipelines.

Despite Russia cutting off Nord Stream 1, gas storage has progressed in recent weeks in Germany and other parts of Europe.

We do not see any impact on the security of supply, the German economy ministry said, referring to the pressure drop in Nord Stream 1. Storage levels continue to rise steadily. They are currently at about 91 per cent. (AP)



# India look to address death bowling concerns in final tune up ahead of T20 WC

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPT 27 /--/ India will be looking to round off their T20 World Cup preparation with a marked improvement in their death bowling besides providing crucial game time to its untested players in the three-match series against South Africa, beginning here on Wednesday. India skipper Rohit Sharma, expectedly, singled out death bowling as an area that requires improvement following the series win over Australia. The hosts will be without two of their key bowlers, Hardik Pandya and Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who have been rested ahead of the ICC event next month. Mohammad Shami, who is one of the World Cup reserves, is yet to recover from COVID-19 and will be missing the three games against the Proteas after being unavailable the rubber against Australia. Harshal Patel did not have the best of times in his comeback series against Australia but he will be expected to get back to his best in the final three games before the World Cup. His career economy rate stands at 9.05 but he conceded more than 12 runs per overs against the Aussies. Deepak Chahar, who is also on standby for the Word Cup, did not get a game in the previous series and he could get a chance if the team decides to rotate its pacers over the three games. Arshdeep Singh will return to bolster the team's resources in the slog overs, making an effective combination alongside Jasprit Bumrah, who will aiming to regain his full rhythm after coming back from injury. In the series decider against Australia, Yuzvendra Chahal showed what he can do if the ball is gripping and turning after looking flat in the first two games. Keeping the Australian conditions in mind, the wily leg-spinner will be looking to up his game on docile pitches. As Rohit spoke about the importance of giving all the players game time ahead of the World Cup, R Ashwin could get a look in. In the batting department, K L Rahul would like to make the most of these three games after missing out in the last two games against Australia. With Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma are looking in good touch,



Virat Kohli smacks one during training

it is important that Rahul too is in full flow before the team travels to Australia. Dinesh Karthik got to play all of eight balls against Australia and Rohit has already said the designated finisher in the squad needs more time in the middle. World Cup bound Deepak Hooda will end up missing all the six games before the mega event as he has been ruled out of the South Africa T20s with a back injury. Shreyas Iyer is expected to take Hooda's place in the squad. Over the next week, India will be competing against a team they are yet to beat at home in a bilateral series. South Africa and India will face each other in a group game in Australia and though conditions are totally different here, both teams can pick out areas to target in the coming three games. "The pitches in Australia will be different and ground size will be a lot bigger, but as a bowler there is always something you can work on. It is a great opportunity to be bowling at these Indian batters and pick up on a few things and use against them in the World Cup," said Tabraiz Shamsi. All eyes will also be on the young Tristan Stubbs who has made the World Cup squad on the back of his good show in franchise cricket. (PTI)

**Squads:**  
**South Africa:** Temba Bavuma (captain), Quinton de Kock, Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Heinrich Klaassen, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Wayne Parnell, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Rilee Rossouw, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs.  
**India:** Rohit Sharma (captain), KL Rahul, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Dinesh Karthik (wicket-keeper), R. Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Harshal Patel, Deepak Chahar, Jasprit Bumrah.  
Match starts 7 PM IST.



Kagiso Rabada gets ready for a net session

## GAME NOTES

### India U-17 women's team loses to Sweden

NEW DELHI, SEPT 27 /--/ The India U-17 women's team suffered a 1-3 defeat against Sweden in its first match of the exposure tour in the run-up to the FIFA U-17 World Cup. The match was played at Girona in Spain. It was the first match of the exposure tour for the Indian girls ahead of the age-group showpiece, which India is hosting in October-November. Sudha Tirkey (62') scored the only goal for India after Sweden U-17 girls took a comfortable 3-0 lead through Ida Gramfors (44') Sara Frigren (52') and Selma Astrom (54'). India, however, looked promising at the start as they competed on equal terms in an intense midfield battle that saw winger Anita Kumari get an early shot at the rival goal, which was saved. Minutes later, Nitu Linda tried her luck to take a shot from the edge of the Swedish penalty area, but was blocked. India earned a free kick in the 19th minute and Anita once again made an attempt at the rival goal, this time a header, but the Swedish custodian Elin Ekmark saved it with ease. (PTI)

### Chennaiyin FC rope in Kerala winger Prasanth K

CHENNAI, SEPT 27 /--/ Chennaiyin FC on Tuesday announced the signing of talented Kerala winger Prasanth K on a one-year deal for the 2022-23 Indian Super League (ISL) season. The 25-year-old Kozhikode-born player will be joining the Marina Machans after spending five years at Kerala Blasters FC. Prasanth has made 76 appearances so far in his professional career and has three goals and as many assists to his name. In 2017, he made his professional debut with Chennai City in the I-league after being after being loaned out by Kerala Blasters. "I'm truly happy and overwhelmed to be a part of this club. I am here to give my 100 per cent and raise the bar," Prasanth said in a release issued by the club. A product of the AIFF Elite Academy, Prasanth has also represented India at U-17 and U-20 levels. In the 2021-22 season, he recorded one goal and one assist in 324 minutes of football. The two-time champions, Chennaiyin FC will kickstart their campaign against ATK Mohun Bagan in Kolkata on October 10. (PTI)

### Chess: World Champion Carlsen accuses Niemann of cheating

NEW DELHI, SEPT 27 /--/ Chess World Champion Magnus Carlsen has accused fellow Grandmaster Hans Niemann of cheating "more and more" than what he has already admitted, saying that he will not play against any rival indulging in such wrongdoing. Carlsen put out a statement late Monday night, a week after he withdrew against the American after just one move at the Julius Baer Generation Cup. Earlier, the 31-year-old Norwegian had quit the Sinquefield Cup in Saint Louis following his surprise defeat against Niemann. "I believe that Niemann has cheated more and more recently- than he has publicly admitted," Carlsen wrote. (PTI)

## Kohli's power game is coming back at right time: Manjrekar

NEW DELHI, SEPT 27 /--/ Virat Kohli has got back his "power game" and things have started falling in place for him ahead of the T20 World Cup, feels former India Test cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar. Kohli had endured a lean patch for nearly three years before he decided to take a month-long mental health break while reinventing himself during last month's Asia Cup. He finished as India's highest run-getter and since then continued his good form in the just-concluded T20s against Australia, where his half-century in the series decider gave glimpses of vintage Kohli that the fans have been yearning to see. "...right from the Asia Cup every match that he (Kohli) got runs, not just the runs, there was some improvement coming. I think the power game is back. He is trusting his power game," Manjrekar



*During the Asia Cup, slowly and steadily, certain things start to happen, the pull shots came in, and the sixes started going more into the stands than just going over the rope as it was going in the IPL. So, the pieces falling back to frame the perfect picture. Now it's all about putting all these kinds of performances in the main event — Sanjay Manjrekar*

told in Sports 18's 'Sports Over The Top' show. "There was a time when he was getting runs but his power game was not coming at his beck and call. That is starting to happen," Manjrekar said. The fact that he is being able to hit good balls for boundaries is a welcome sign, said Manjrekar. "He is dispatching good balls for big boundaries and sixes. It's all about confidence. This is a guy who's damn self-confident and drives himself to excellence but for long-time runs weren't coming and his confidence was tender.

Kohli was the second highest overall run getter in the Asia Cup, scoring 276 in five innings at an average of 92.00, a strike rate of 147.59 with two half-centuries and a ton. "During the Asia Cup, slowly and steadily, certain things start to happen, the pull shots came in, and the sixes started going more into the stands than just going

- is playing too much cricket. In the sense, that he's played all the matches coming into this series as well," he said. "The Bhuvneshwar Kumar I have seen over the years, he's not one of the strongest guys going around, he's not somebody who takes a lot of workload, he plays one format and hardly any other. "He's somebody if you notice, barring injury, if he comes later a break to play in any tournament, he is at his best in the first few games. So, I am going to put down Bhuvneshwar Kumar's current performance to just match fatigue." Manjrekar said Harshal has limitations as a pacer.

"Harshal Patel has limitations as a seam bowler, but India must look as one of the third seaming options and must look at a couple of others as options and I keep stressing on Mohammed Shami as the other option." (PTI)

## Facing new ball quite a challenge in India: Bavuma

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPT 27 /--/ South Africa captain Temba Bavuma feels facing the swinging ball in the powerplay will be one of the main challenges for his team in the three-match T20 series against India, beginning here on Wednesday. India relied on their batting might to bounce back from being 0-1 down to post a 2-1 win in the recently-concluded three-T20 series against Australia. The focus will now shift to an identical match-up against the Proteas, the final dress rehearsal for both the teams before the T20 World Cup in Australia next month. "Facing the new ball bowlers (in India) is quite challenging, they make the ball to swing and move in quite a bit, a bit more than what we are accustomed to in South Africa. That's obviously a challenge you have to manoeuvre



*Facing the new ball bowlers (in India) is quite challenging, they make the ball to swing and move in quite a bit, a bit more than what we are accustomed to in South Africa. That's obviously a challenge you have to manoeuvre around — Temba Bavuma*

around," the South African white-ball skipper said on the eve of the opening T20 here. The thinks in India's pace bowling armour were badly exposed in the three-match T20s against Australia. In the series decider in Hyderabad on Sunday, the two seasoned pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar together conceded 79 runs from seven overs, with the latter claiming one wicket. Harshal Patel, who is considered a death over specialist, also was a big letdown and the South African skipper knows what it takes to succeed in India. "The key is to limit the damage and not allow the wickets to fall and try and get the momentum going. But yeah, Bhuvni and Bumrah they always challenge you with the new ball up front," he added. Bhuvneshwar, by the way, is rested for the series ahead of the World Cup as the

I think we answered it quite well. We expect this to be a good series, a competitive one as well. This is the last series before the World Cup, we will be looking to fill up the gaps whatever they are," he added. Personally, Bavuma has a lot to prove after being snubbed in their SA20 auction, the country's inaugural T20 League. Dismissing it as 'side-show', the skipper said his role is to lead the country and keep everyone in a good space before the World Cup. "I'm here to make sure the guys are in the best space possible going into that big World Cup tournament. All the other distractions, side-shows as I would call it, I will deal with on a personal level. "But being here within the team, as long as I am still wearing the shirt, it will be to serve and lead the team as best as I can," the 32-year-old said. (PTI)

## Nations League: Italy beat Hungary to reach semi-finals; England rally against Germany

LONDON, SEPT 27 /--/ Part one of the healing process is complete for Italy. Looking to regain respect after failing to qualify for a second straight World Cup, the Azzurri advanced to next year's finals tournament in the Nations League by winning at Hungary 2-6 thanks to goals by Giacomo Raspadori and Federico Dimarco on Monday. By topping a group also containing England and Germany, the Italians joined the Netherlands and Croatia in qualifying for the final four, which will be hosted by the Dutch in June. Portugal or Spain will complete the lineup when they face off on Tuesday. Unlike Italy, England and Germany will be going to the World Cup in Qatar in less than two months and they'll head to the Middle East on the back of a wild 3-3 draw at Wembley Stadium, where all the goals were scored in the second half. Trailing 2-0, England scored three goals in a 12-minute span from the 71st — through Luke Shaw, Mason Mount and Harry Kane's penalty — only for Kai Havertz to pounce on a fumble by England goalkeeper Nick Pope to equalize in the 87th. England's winless run stretched to six games,

with Gareth Southgate's team finishing their Nations League campaign without a victory and relegated. Germany are not in much better shape ahead of the World Cup, with just one win in their last seven games. Italy won Group A3 with 11 points, one more than Hungary, who went into the game in Budapest needing only a draw to reach the Nations League final four for the first time. The Italians are finding it easier to qualify for Nations League finals than World Cups. They also got to the 2021 tournament, losing to Spain in the semifinals on home soil in their first few months as the reigning European champion. Plenty has changed in the team since beating England in the European Championship final at Wembley last year, not least up front where Raspadori is making his mark. Three days after scoring the winner against England in Milan, the Napoli striker put Italy ahead after Adam Nagy's back-pass came up short. Wilfried Gnonto challenged goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi for the ball, which bounced free and Raspadori was alert to round Gulacsi and



Italy's Federico Dimarco celebrates after scoring against Hungary in UEFA Nations League

convert his finish in the 27th. Gianluigi Donnarumma produced a string of diving stops — including a triple save in a matter of seconds — before Nicolò Barella played a ball through at the other end to Bryan Cristante, who crossed for Dimarco to score from close range for his first goal for Italy. Late pressure from Hungary failed to yield a goal. "We were excellent for 70 minutes, the last 20 I didn't like too much," Italy coach Roberto Mancini said. "We're happy — it's important to have reached the Nations League final four for the second time." Under pressure for his starting place in England's team, Harry Maguire didn't help his cause against Germany. The Manchester United center back was at fault for Germany's 52nd-minute opener from the spot by Ilkay Gundogan — Maguire initially gave the ball away to Jamal Musiala, then clumsily fouled the teenager in the area moments later — and was then dispossessed in midfield to allow the Germans to break, culminating in a curling finish from the edge of the area by Havertz. (AP)