

FURY OF THE FLAMES



SUBRATA

CAMPBELL BAY SEPT 26/-- Two houses, tsunami shelters were completely gutted in a fire accident at Campbell Bay on Monday. According to sources, the fire that broke out at the RPRS shelter colony at Campbell Bay was caused by a LPG cylinder burst. It was so intense that a joint operation had to be

Three persons, including two fire service and one Police personnel suffered injuries. The police official who suffered head injuries was airlifted to Port Blair by IAF Dornier aircraft

launched under the direction of the Assistant Commissioner, Campbell Bay in which local Police, Fire department, Indian Coast Guard, Navy and Army Personnel participated to save the lives of the people and check the spread of fire.

Eye witnesses explained that two explosions of LPG cylinders were reported and the fire

spread fast. All the residents were moved away from the fire site in order to prevent more damage as more cylinders were inside the houses. Taking note of spread of fire to adjacent houses, the Assistant Commissioner immediately contracted the Army establishment at Campbell Bay and fire tenders from INS BAAZ and extra rescue force of the Army were

called. Officers from Indian Coast Guards have also actively participated in the rescue operation. About three persons were reported injured, two of whom are from the Fire department who are under medical treatment at PHC, Campbell Bay. One officer from the Police department also received head injury and he was airlifted by Indian Air Force Dornier aircraft to

Port Blair. In all two houses, along with households, materials were completely gutted in the fire. One house had three members while the other house had one member. The family members of the burnt houses were temporarily shifted to Panchayat Guest House and will likely be shifted to another shelter home shortly. Panchayat Pradhan and other local residents have arranged for food and other facilities for the affected families.

The Assistant Commissioner has ordered for immediate compensation to the victims for the loss they have suffered as per rules. Coordinated efforts by all agencies and effective & timely management of the fire incident has resulted in controlling the spread of fire. This was first of its own kind of coordinated efforts of various agencies wherein different agencies worked together to control the blaze and save precious life.

MP meets Secretary (Education), places four crucial demands

PORT BLAIR, SEPT 26/-- The Member of Parliament, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma on Friday met the Secretary (Education) and placed four crucial demands related to the welfare of students. Mr. Sharma demanded starting a second shift in JNRM, from the 2022-2023 session, so that the maximum number of students can get admission in degree programmes and study in their dream subjects in these Islands for their better future. He pointed out that while many students can afford education in mainland colleges, most of the students of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, especially those who hail from remote villages of North and Middle Andaman as well as Nicobar District can't afford education in mainland colleges but they are very eager to get higher education. In his second demand, Mr. Sharma requested the Secretary of Education to start two new bus routes, exclusively for girl students. One from Chatham Jetty to JNRM to ANCOL and vice versa and second from Garacharma to ANCOL to JNRM and vice versa. The demand was relating to development of more playgrounds for children and youths of Islands under Khelo India initiative, so that children and youths can remain mentally and physically fit. He also demanded to start an exclusive boarding school for Children With Special Needs (CWSN) so that they can get special care and proper education from expert educators of CWSN children. Mr. Sharma also requested the Secretary of Education to fill up four posts of Assistant Director (sports) which are lying vacant, through deputation.



Diglipur Police seizes 1.4 kg of ganja, two arrested

DIGLIPUR, SEPT 26/-- As part of the efforts to make the islands drugs free, a team of PS Diglipur headed SHO Police Station, Diglipur arrested two persons and recovered ganja. As per reports, a credible information was received TO ps Diglipur that on Sunday that one auto driver is carrying illicit ganja in R.K gram area and is going for delivery to someone. Acting swiftly, the team came into action and intercepted the auto driver Dipankar Mistry, S/o Mr. Dinesh Mistry, R/o R.K Gram near Kalpong river bridge. Seeing the Police party the auto driver threw a packet into Kalpong river and tried to escape from the spot.

The Police suspecting an illegal item thrown into the river, some of the team members jumped into the river and recovered the packet after swimming for around two kilometres in

Kalpang river and remaining team members chased & apprehended the auto driver. The recovered packet having illicit ganja was weighing around 1.2 kgs. On interrogation, he revealed name of a receiver person named Biswajit Sarkar, S/o Mr. Bimal Sarkar, STS Bus driver, R/o R.K Gram, Diglipur. (Contd on page-6)



TEXTILE LAXMI NEERAJ TEXTILE
A Complete Family Store
ABERDEEN BAZAR | BATHU BASTHI

FESTIVAL Collection

PLOT FOR SALE AT SHAHEED DWEEP

Developed plots 400 Sqmtrs and above for sale at Sun rise Point, Near Beach Sitapur, near TSG Aura, Shaheed Dweep, ideal for Budget Hotels, Restaurant, holiday homes, home stays, Guest houses etc.

Contact: 9474267064/ 9933266424



This festive season
Feel Authentic
with great collections on Mens | Womens | Kids Wear with **Goenka's**.

Goenka's

Follow us @goenka's_andaman

Aberdeen Bazaar +91 96095 73939
Bathu Basti +91 96091 44003
Bambooflat +91 96090 17300
Diglipur +91 96091 33009



May This Occasions Bring Prosperity & Happiness To All

New Collections Arrival

SRI RAJESWARI JEWELLERY
ABERDEEN BAZAR, PORT BLAIR. Ph : 233822

RAJARAJESWARI JEWELLERS
ABERDEEN BAZAR, PORT BLAIR. Ph : 237719

BIS 100% Hallmarked Jewellery



Little andaman
... because little things matter

Exclusively for Kids & Pets

OPENING SOON!

9679547179 / 03192-263069

Near Annai Agency, Junglighat, Port Blair, South Andaman - 744103

Sales Boys and Girls Urgently Needed

Rajiv Gandhi assassination case: SC notice to Centre, TN on Nalini's plea seeking premature release

NEW DELHI, SEPT 26 --/ The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the Centre and the Tamil Nadu government on a plea filed by Nalini Sriharan, serving life sentence in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, seeking premature release.


A bench of Justices B R Gavai and B V Nagarathna issued notices to the Centre and the Tamil Nadu government and sought their replies on the plea. The top court also issued notices on the plea filed by R P Ravichandran, who is also a convict in the case. Nalini has challenged the June 17 order of the Madras

High Court, which rejected her plea for early release, and cited the apex court judgement ordering the release of co-convict A G Perarivalan.

The high court had on June 17 rejected the petitions of Sriharan and Ravichandran, both convicted in former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, to order their release without even the consent of the state's governor.

The high courts do not have the power under Article 226 of the Constitution to do so, unlike the Supreme Court which enjoyed the special power

under Article 142, the high court had said while rejecting their pleas. Invoking its extraordinary



Rajiv Gandhi

power under Article 142 of the Constitution, the top court had on May 18 ordered the release of

Perarivalan, who had served over 30 years in jail, and said the Tamil Nadu governor ought not to have sent the "binding" advice made by the state cabinet for his release to the president. The apex court had said the advice of the state cabinet is binding on the governor in matters related to commutation/remission of sentences under Article 161 of the Constitution.

Under article 142, the top court may issue any verdict or order necessary to provide "complete justice".

Gandhi was assassinated on the night of May 21, 1991 at

Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu by a woman suicide bomber, identified as Dhanu, at a poll rally. In its May 1999 order, the top court had upheld the death sentence of four convicts Perarivalan, Murugan, Santhan and Nalini. However, in 2014, it commuted the death sentence of Perarivalan to life imprisonment along with those of Santhan and Murugan on grounds of delay in deciding their mercy petitions. Nalini's death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in 2001 on the consideration that she has a daughter. (PTI)

None of Cong leaders want to be party's national prez, prefer to be a CM: BJP

NEW DELHI, SEPT 26 --/ BJP leader Satish Poonia on Monday took a dig at the Congress over the crisis in its Rajasthan unit, saying none of its leaders want to be the party's national president and prefer to be a state chief minister or a regional leader.

The Congress in Rajasthan plunged into a crisis as several MLAs loyal to Ashok Gehlot, who was seen as the frontrunner for the post of party's national president, submitted resignation letters over a possible move to appoint Sachin Pilot as the next CM. "This drama of 'Kisa Kursi Ka' (the tale of CM's chair) started in Rajasthan in 2018 when slogans for Gehlot and Sachin Pilot were raised. It then continued for portfolio allocation and then for rooms in the secretariat in Jaipur," Poonia said adding that throughout the entire episode, the people of the state suffered. The power tussle continued on Monday in Rajasthan, one of the two states where Congress is power on its own, as MLAs loyal to Gehlot remain non-committal on holding a meeting with the party's central observers. "The condition of Congress is so bad that none of its leaders want to be the party's national president. Its leaders prefer to be a chief minister or a leader in his state," Poonia told PTI. (PTI)

Delhi starts vaccination drive to curb spread of lumpy skin disease

NEW DELHI, SEPT 26 --/ The Delhi government on Monday started vaccinating healthy cattle to prevent the spread of lumpy skin disease, which has so far infected 571 animals in the national capital, officials said.

A total of 275 animals have recovered from the infection in Delhi so far, and the number of active cases stands at 296. "We have procured 25,000 doses of goat pox vaccine from Indian Immunologicals Limited and have started vaccinating healthy cattle in Delhi today," an official of the animal husbandry department said. These doses will be administered free of cost. It will take around a week to complete the vaccination drive, he said. The government will adopt the ring vaccination strategy in which healthy cattle in a five-km radius of the affected areas will be inoculated with the Uttarakashi strain of the virus, the official said. Most cases of lumpy skin disease have been detected in the southwest Delhi district - in the Goyla dairy area, Rewla Khanpur area, Ghumanhera and Najafgarh. (PTI)



Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurating over bridge built at Bhadaj Circle in Ahmedabad on Monday

Union minister Shah inaugurates flyover, health centre in his constituency in Gujarat

AHMEDABAD, SEPT 26 --/ Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday inaugurated a flyover and a primary health centre near Gujarat's Ahmedabad city. Shah is on a two-day visit to Gujarat from Monday where he will participate in a host of programmes including a farmers' conference in Ahmedabad district. In the morning, Shah inaugurated

a flyover near Bhadaj village on SP Ring Road on the city's outskirts, which falls under his Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency. This six-lane flyover has been built by the Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority (AUDA) at a cost of Rs 73 crore to ease traffic congestion on the busy Bhadaj circle of the ring road, a release by the Gujarat government said.

Later, Shah inaugurated a primary health centre in Virochannagar village of Sanand taluka, which also falls under his parliamentary constituency. As per the official schedule, the Union minister will also lay the foundation stone for a hospital to be run by the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) at Sanand in Ahmedabad district. In the

afternoon, he will attend a farmers' conference at Bavla village in Ahmedabad district. Farmers from Shah's Gandhinagar parliamentary constituency are organising the Rin Sweekar Sammelan (gratitude acceptance conference) to express gratitude for providing irrigation facilities in 164 villages, a government release said. (PTI)

Assembly polls may be over by November-end: Gujarat BJP chief

Cong says 'hijacking' of Constitutional bodies

AHMEDABAD, SEPT 26 --/ Gujarat unit Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) chief CR Paatil on Monday claimed the upcoming Assembly elections in the state are likely to get over by November-end, unlike the last two polls that went on till mid-December.

Paatil, who was addressing a "page samiti sammelan" in Anand city, some 80 kilometres away from Ahmedabad, however, was quick to add this was his "political estimation" and that he had not spoken to any poll authority. The opposition Congress latched onto Paatil's statement with party leader Deepak Babaria claiming that it showed how the BJP-ruled Union government had

"weakened and hijacked" constitutional authorities like the Election



CR Paatil

Commission. "I think the (Assembly) election will be over by November-end. During 2012 and 2017, polls were over by December 12. Nobody has told me this, nor

have I talked to anyone regarding this," Paatil said. The 2017 Assembly elections were held in two phases on December 9 and 14, and the votes were counted on December 18. The 2012 elections were also held in two phases on December 13 and 17, and the results were declared on December 20. The term of the current Gujarat Assembly is set to expire on February 18, 2023. Paatil added he is not authorised to declare poll dates and called on workers to be alert and prepared.

As Congress slammed BJP, Paatil later clarified that his statement was merely based on activities of the ECI in poll-bound Gujarat and Himachal

Pradesh. "I think the elections might get over 8-10 days before (its usual date) by November-end because of the way the Election Commission has informed the officers to prepare for it. I had made it clear that I haven't talked to anyone regarding this and this is just my political estimation," Paatil told reporters in Vadodara.

Hitting back, senior Congress leader Deepak Babaria said, "This statement is a mirror reflection of how the Central government has weakened and hijacked constitutional authorities. This is an example of how they are dictating the officers of the Election Commission." (PTI)

Ghulam Nabi Azad launches Democratic Azad Party in J&K

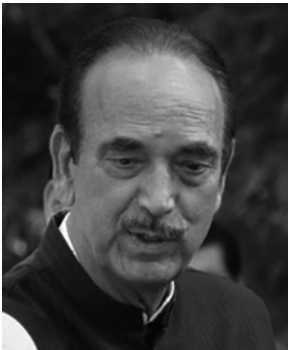
JAMMU, SEPT 26 --/ Launching his Democratic Azad Party here on Monday, former Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said he will not make the restoration of Article 370 an election issue in Jammu and Kashmir.

Issues of roads, water supply and price rise are meant for elections. "I don't stop anybody from making anything an election issue. I have a lot of things, why

should I make it an election issue," he asked. Replying to a question about Kashmir-centric parties, particularly the PDP, criticising his remarks on Article 370, Azad said, "You just check Parliament records of who has spoken or who has not (on Article 370). Get the record of Parliament on any one's name. But my take is simple that I don't use such issues for elections." Azad was addressing a press

conference here after launching his party. "I am launching Democratic Azad Party (DAP) from here today. It symbolises democracy and freedom of speech and thought. Our ideology will be based on the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi," he said.

He said the DAP will have "no competition" with any other political party and it will focus on "strengthening" peace and



Ghulam Nabi Azad

normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. Azad added that he has never said restoration of Article 370 was not possible. "I never said this cannot happen. I said that I cannot convince Prime Minister Narendra Modi-jii. If anyone can persuade Modi-jii and Union Home Minister Amit Shah-jii, they should do it. It will be a welcome step. I do not have any such influence on Modi-jii," Azad said. He said

only Parliament can restore Article 370 but "we need a majority". "When voting took place in Parliament by Modi-jii and Amit Shah-jii, they got 86 per cent votes," Azad added. By abrogating Article 370, the central government had revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. The Supreme Court has agreed to list after Dussehra vacation the pleas challenging the decision.

Azad said it was a

welcome step that the Supreme Court will be hearing the case from October 10. The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister had ended his more than five-decade-long association with the Congress on August 26. Over two dozen prominent Congress leaders, including former deputy chief minister Tara Chand, had resigned from the Congress in support of Azad. (PTI)

Prez Murmu inaugurates Dasara festivities in Mysuru

MYSURU, SEPT 26 --/ The famous 10-day long Dasara celebrations commenced in this palace city on Monday with religious and traditional fervour, with President of India Droupadi Murmu inaugurating the festivities. Celebrated as "Nada Habba" (state festival), the festivities will be a grand affair this year depicting Karnataka's rich culture and traditions, coupled with reminiscence of royal pomp and glory, after muted celebrations for the last two years in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. The President

inaugurated the festivities during the auspicious "Vrushchika Lagna" by showering flowers on the idol of goddess Chamundeshwari, the presiding deity of Mysuru royals, amid chanting of vadic hymns, at the premises of Chamundeshwari temple atop the Chamundi Hills here. Murmu is the first President to take part in Mysuru Dasara. She was accompanied by Karnataka Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot, chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi and Shobha Karandlaje and several Ministers in the state

cabinet among others at the inaugural.

The President also visited the Chamundeshwari temple and offered prayers to the goddess, who is referred to as the "Naada Devate" (state deity), ahead of the inaugural. This is also her first visit to any state as the President of India. The 10-day event, like every year, is set to showcase Karnataka's cultural heritage resplendent with folk art forms, and attracts large crowds and tourists, after it was scaled down for the last two years due to Covid-19. (PTI)

Cong prez Poll: You will see the support I enjoy when I submit my nomination paper, says Tharoor

PALAKKAD, SEPT 26 --/ Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Monday claimed he has the support of party workers from across the country for his bid to fight the AICC president polls. Amid uncertainty over Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's candidature for the top party post, Tharoor also met Rahul Gandhi on the sidelines of Bharat Jodo Yatra at Pattambi in this north Kerala district. Tharoor said it was a courtesy call as Gandhi was in his home district. "You will see the support I enjoy when I submit my nomination paper. I will be in the fray if I get support from party workers from the majority of the states. So many people from different parts of the country have requested me to be in the fray," Tharoor told reporters reacting to a query on his candidature for the Congress president's post. Tharoor said he was interested in fighting the poll but the picture will be clearer only after

September 30, the last date for submitting nomination papers.

The Thiruvananthapuram MP, who has got the nomination form for the poll collected from the Congress headquarters last Saturday, said a candidate should fight the polls with confidence. "I have got the form. I am meeting people and talking to them", he said.

Asked whether he has the support of the Nehru-Gandhi family in fighting the polls, the Congress leader said he had discussed the matter with Sonia Gandhi, Rahul and Priyanka and "and all three have directly told me that they don't have any issues". He also claimed the support of party workers in Kerala in his bid to fight the polls.

Tharoor had met Sonia Gandhi last Monday and expressed his intention to contest the poll. The Congress president conveyed she would stay "neutral" in the elections, according to sources. Sonia Gandhi had welcomed the

idea of more people contesting the poll and dispelled the notion that there would be an "official candidate". 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 a scrutiny of the 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 (PCC) delegates will vote in the poll. The Congress last saw a contest for the party president's post in November 2000. Jitendra Prasad had lost to Sonia Gandhi in 2000 and prior to that, Sitaram Kesri had defeated Sharad Pawar and Rajesh Pilot in 1997. (PTI)

Stubble burning, power supply among issues to be taken up during Punjab Assembly session today

CHANDIGARH, SEPT 26 --/ The one-day Punjab Assembly session will be held here on Tuesday during which issues related to stubble burning, goods and services tax and power supply will be taken up for discussion.

The day-long session is also likely to be a stormy one with opposition parties set to corner the state government on various issues, including alleged illegal sand mining.

Sutlej Yamuna Link canal and law and order. Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Sunday gave his nod to convene the House on September 27 after days of squabble between the Raj Bhavan and the AAP government over holding an assembly session. The governor's approval had come a day after the AAP government informed him about the issues to be taken up during the session.

The Bhagwant Mann-led government on Saturday had informed the governor that issues like stubble burning, goods and services tax and power supply would be discussed in the regular Assembly session on September 27.

The governor was also informed that in addition, business on different issues as per notices received from the members may also be taken up during the session according to relevant provisions of the 'rules of procedure and conduct of business in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha.' It will be interesting to see whether the AAP government brings a confidence motion in the assembly.

Earlier, the governor had withdrawn the permission to hold a special session on September 22 when the AAP government wanted to bring only a confidence motion. Congress leader Sukhpal Singh Khaira on Monday dubbed the one-day session as a "joke" and said it should have been summoned to discuss burning issues like Sutlej Yamuna Link canal, sacrilege and crop damage due to untimely rains. "Tomorrow's session of Vidhan Sabha is a joke as

after spending 1 Cr of peoples' money, there's no question-hour as govt needs 15 days notice to answer them! It should have been summoned appropriately to discuss burning issues like Syl, Beadbi, Crop damage etc instead of merely 2 issues," said the Bholath MLA in a tweet.

Shiromani Akali Dal leader Daljit Singh Cheema said the session should be held for more days to discuss the state's important issues including "corruption, illegal sand mining, deteriorating law and order and the excise policy."

There is no point in holding the session if the AAP wants to enact a "drama" by bringing the confidence motion, said Cheema.

The Aam Aadmi Party had recently claimed that at least 10 of its MLAs were approached by the BJP with an offer of Rs 25 crore each in a bid to topple the six-month-old government under its 'Operation Lotus.' (PTI)

CS VISITS SWARAJ DWEEP

Inspects tourism facilities, reviews progress of infrastructure projects and held meeting with PRIs

PORT BLAIR, SEPT 26/--/ Mr. Keshav Chandra, Chief Secretary visited Swaraj Dweep on a day long visit to the popular tourism destination. The Chief Secretary visited the harbor area at Govind Nagar -1 and reviewed the development works for construction of new Sea Port Terminal Building being undertaken by ALHW. Expressing displeasure over the delay in work progress, which is causing inconvenience to the tourists and visitors, the Chief Secretary directed the concerned officials to expedite the work and ensure its timely completion. Noticing the inconvenience faced by tourists at the entry point to SwarajDweep, the Chief Secretary directed that as interim measure, to facilitate the tourists, a holding area with proper shed may be created with pre-paid taxi booths, so that tourists can avail the taxi right at the entry point. The Chief Secretary also inspected the Fish Landing Centre at the Jetty and directed the concerned officials to ensure proper upkeep of the facility and its efficient utilization in a time bound manner. Thereafter, the Chief Secretary visited Elephanta Beach which is famous for water sports activities. During the visit, he inspected the facilities available there for tourists such as washroom, changing room, water etc. and urged for its upkeep, keeping in mind the fragile marine environment. He also interacted with the SHG members selling



eatables and fruits to the visiting tourists and suggested they aesthetically set up the stall which will create a beautiful ambience. The ex President, Havelock Tourist Boat Operator Association, ShriPrashantGuchhait briefed the Chief Secretary about various water sports activities being conducted there and requested for regulation of activities at the beach. The Chief Secretary directed the officers concerned to make proper regulatory guidelines immediately. Later, the Chief Secretary inspected the Power Station at Govind Nagar 2 and Community Wellness Centre (CWC) at Govind Nagar-3 and inspected the facilities and enquired about the problems. MrChandra directed to make operational the Dialysis Unit as

soon as possible, for which the equipments have already arrived. The Chief Secretary also inspected Krishna nallah water source at Krishna Nagar-6 where water has been overflowing and directed APWD to ensure that water wastage is contained and the issue should be rectified at the earliest for its proper usage for public. In the afternoon, the Chief Secretary held a meeting with the PRIs at Dolphin Resort Conference hall during which he enquired about the issues and challenges faced by the local inhabitants. Sector wise issues pertaining to road, electricity, water, school, health, tourism, forests & revenue matter were highlighted by the public representatives. The Chief Secretary assured that genuine

grievances which require immediate redressal will be looked into and the concerned officials were directed to ensure its speedy redressal for the convenience of the people. The Chief Secretary remarked that SwarajDweep is a flagship destination and role of aesthetics is vital for development of the Island to make it an attractive tourist destination. He suggested that in future, the architecture of the place should reflect the aesthetic beauty of the place, with more emphasis on eco-friendly construction materials. As the upcoming international airport in Port Blair is poised to witness the arrival of international tourists to the Island, the role of built architecture and aesthetics became more important. He stressed that along with promotion of sustainable tourism, the aesthetic look of the place and its proper maintenance is important to attract more visitors. In the evening, the Chief Secretary visited the famous Radhanagar Beach, a Blue Flag Certified Beach which has become one of the most sought after beaches among visitors. He also enquired about the facilities available there for tourists and suggested that stalls selling wares at the entry point to the beach may be aesthetically set up. The Chief Secretary also appreciated the beauty of the beach and its maintenance. He also witnessed the mesmerizing sunset at the beach.

Annual General Body meeting of AATO



PORT BLAIR, SEPT 26/--/ The Annual General Body meeting of Andaman Association of Tour Operators was held on 25th September 2022, at hotel N.K. International. The meeting was attended by more than 70 members of the association and presided over by the President of AATO, Mr. M.Vinod. The programme started with a two minutes silence to mark respect towards the departed souls of the tourism fraternity. Mr. K.Hamza, General Secretary of AATO welcomed the members. Two interactive sessions, one each on GST and Digital Marketing was conducted by industry experts for the AATO members. Mr. SaikatBiswas, Joint

Secretary of AATO briefed the members about the activities, Objectives and future programmes of the association. In his presidential address, Mr. M.Vinod shared his vision for the association and sustainable development of tourism in A&N Islands. He urged the members to conduct business ethically and register themselves with the Dept. of IP&T. He informed the members that AATO will render all possible help to its members for registration and recognition with national tourism bodies. The programme concluded with vote of thanks by Vice President Mr. Krishna Saha followed by dinner for all its members.

Civic Chief chairs BMC meeting



PORT BLAIR, SEPT 26/--/ A meeting of the Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) was held at the conference hall of PBMC headquarters under the Chairpersonship of Smti. KavithaUdhaya Kumar, Chairperson, Port Blair Municipal Council/BMC. At the outset, the member Secretary BMC, MrBhanuPratapYadav, Retd.DFO, welcomed the Chairperson & all the participants / special invitees and gave a brief of the activities of BMC and preparation of People's Bio diversity Register (PBR). The Committee members & special invitees in the BMC committee from

concerned department discussed various issues, particularly the issues regarding updating of People's BioDiversity Register (PBR) and identification of new plants / herbs to be added in the PBR. The committee further deliberated identification of new wetlands / naturally vegetated land for better conservation and protection of existing endemic flora and fauna. Identification of eco-friendly tourism spots within the jurisdiction of Municipal Limits was also brought to the notice of the Chairperson. The meeting was concluded with the vote of thanks by the chair.

MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to learn that along with the rest of the world, the A&N Islands is also celebrating 'World Tourism Day-2022' befittingly on 27th September, 2022. It was on this very day in 1980 that the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) came into being.

The theme for this year's celebration, 'Rethinking Tourism' gives us the opportunity to reconsider how we can develop tourism in a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient manner.

Owing to its composite culture, the A&N Islands are aptly described as 'Mini India' and tell interesting tales woven into its social fabric to the visitors. The pristine & sunspoil beaches, plethora of options for tourists in underwater, game fishing and water sports activities make our Islands one of the most sought after tourist destinations in the world. As we celebrate 'AzadiKaAmritMahotsav', commemorating 75 years of India's Independence, several tourism-related activities have been initiated by the Govt. of India, which are being fervently carried out in the Islands too.

The Tourism Department of the Administration, in tandem, with other Departments is also making efforts in reaching out to more tourists globally and extending best facilities to them in these Islands. In the coming days, more mega tourism projects will come up in A&N Islands under the aegis of Islands Development Agency (IDA) with the cooperation of NITI Aayog. This will give further fillip to Island's tourism sector, providing employment opportunities to the local populace and taking us closer to fulfillment of the goal of making India 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

With the coming up of mega infrastructure projects in tourism sector, I am confident that the A&N tourism is poised for a big leap and will emerge as an ideal all-season destination for safe and sustainable tourism in the country. On the occasion of the World Tourism Day', I once again congratulate all tourism stakeholders and islanders.

Jai Hind!

Sd/-
Admiral D K Joshi (Retd.)
Lt. Governor, A&N Islands

TSG Foundation distributes nutrition kits



PORT BLAIR, SEPT 26/--/ TSG foundation keeping up its commitments to the Ni-kshayMitra Scheme distributed nutrition kits to the needy TB patients of SwarajDweepislands. This is a monthly distribution Scheme and will continue for one year. Mr. AmeerBux, Coordinator TSG Foundation and Mr. Abdul Sharif, Member TSG Foundation were present on this occasion.

Seven killed as vehicle falls into gorge in Himachal's Kullu

Prez Murmu, CM Thakur mourn loss of lives

SHIMLA, SEPT 26 /--/ Seven tourists were killed and 10 sustained injuries when a tempo traveller fell into a gorge in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district, officials said on Monday.

President Droupadi Murmu, Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur and Union minister Anurag Thakur, who hails from the state, expressed grief over the accident that took place at 8:30 pm on Sunday near Ghiyaghi in Banjar subdivision. Five tourists died on the spot while two others succumbed to injuries at the hospital, the officials said. The deceased were identified as Rishab Raj, Anshika Jain, Aditya and Ananmaya from Uttar Pradesh, and Saurabh, Priyanka Gupta and Kiran from Delhi, Kullu Superintendent of Police Gurdev Sharma said. Officials had earlier said three of the dead were from IIT Varanasi. However, it was clarified later that they were among the injured. Rahul Goswami, Kshitija Agarwal, Priyapal, Ishan Gupta from Haryana, driver Ajay Chauhan, Abhinav Singh, Nishtha Badoni from Uttar Pradesh, Rushav from New Delhi, Lakshaya from Rajasthan and Jai Aggarwal from Madhya Pradesh are those injured, he said. BJP MLA from Banjar Surender Shourie streamed a video on Facebook at 12.45 am on Monday, informing people about the accident that occurred in his Assembly

May This Durga Puja & Diwali Bring Prosperity & Happiness to All

916 BIS HALL MARK GOLD ORNAMENTS

NEW COLLECTIONS ARRIVAL

DURGA PUJA & DIWALI

MONDAL JEWELLERS

CELL: 9434281991, PH: 234778

48 Shastri Road, Aberdeen Bazar, Port Blair-744101

12/370 R.P. Road, Near Jama Masjid, Aberdeen Bazar, Port Blair

GREETINGS

I extend warm greetings to the people of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, particularly to those entrepreneurs who are in the Tourism Industry, on the occasion of World Tourism Day.

Tourism is the backbone of Andaman and Nicobar Islands' economy and one of the largest sectors to provide employment to our Island youths and hence we need to focus more towards Tourism.

There is a need to listen to all stakeholders of the Tourism Industry and form a Tourism Master plan keeping the next 20 years in mind.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands have tremendous potential for high value tourists and to shine globally in the Tourism Sector.

I am confident that very soon Andaman and Nicobar Islands will become one of the most preferred Tourist Destinations in the entire world.

I take this opportunity to greet the Islanders as well as tourists and express the hope that Tourism will achieve greater heights in the coming years and our Islands will emerge as one of the most sought-after eco-friendly tourist destinations in the world.

Kuldeep Rai Sharma
Member of Parliament
Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Apollo Clinic
Expertise. Closer to you.

DAILY OPD TIME: - 9 AM- 1PM & 4PM-8PM

SPECIALIST DOCTORS AVAILABLE 24X7 IN PORT BLAIR

CHILD SPECIALIST Dr. Satyanand Waman Chitte MBBS, DCH, IBCLC	CHILD SPECIALIST Dr. Niteli Yogesh Vaja MBBS, DCH,	MEDICAL SPECIALIST Dr. B. L. Avinash MBBS, MD	ENT SPECIALIST Dr. M.K. Farooqui MBBS, MS(ENT)
DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGIST Dr. Prabhakaran .T MBBS, MD, Radiodiagnosis, EDI (EUROPE), DICRI	INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGIST Dr. Sumit Sharma MD (RADIOLOGY) Fellowship in Interventional Radiology	CHEST SPECIALIST Dr. D.K. Chaki MBBS, DTCD, PGDCC, MRCP(1)	OBSTETRICS & GYNAECOLOGIST Dr. Divyanti Agrawal MBBS, MS(OBGy), DNB
GENERAL MEDICINE Dr. N.S. Venkatesh MD (Georgia)	ORTHOPAEDICS SURGEON Dr. Saurabh Chachan MBBS MS(ORTHO), MRCS(UK), FMSI(SECUL)	ORTHODONTIST Dr. Shivani Bhatia BDS, MSc(ORTHODONTICS & DENTOFACIAL ORTHOPAEDICS)	GENERAL DENTISTRY Dr. Gurmeet Singh BDS

• CT • X-RAY • ULTRASOUND • 2D-ECHO • TMT • ECG • EEG • NCS • PFT • LABORATORY

No: 192, Garacharma Main Road, Port Blair, South Andaman - 744103. ☎: 03192 252 052 / 522, 📠: 95318 07777

An executive is a person who always decides. Sometimes he decides correctly, but he always decides

John H. Patterson

National Logistics Policy: A beacon light

The recent launch of the National Logistics Policy marks an important step towards India becoming a developed nation which is on the threshold of becoming a world manufacturing hub. The policy will act as a "driving and guiding force" in the words of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who said that the country needs to bring the logistics cost from 13 per cent to a single digit number as soon as possible to ensure that policy plus performance equalled progress. The vision of the policy is to develop a technologically enabled, integrated, cost-efficient, resilient, sustainable and trusted logistics ecosystem in the country for accelerated and inclusive growth. The policy which will be implemented through a Comprehensive Logistics Action Plan (CLAP) aspires to reduce cost of logistics in India to be comparable to global benchmarks by 2030, endeavours to be among top 25 countries by 2030 in the Logistics Performance Index ranking, and create data driven decision support mechanism for an efficient logistics ecosystem. The policy is expected to bring all departments and states together and give India's logistics sector a new direction and take it to greater heights.

In 2018, India was ranked 44th in the World Bank Logistics Performance Index, a measure through which the Bank ranks countries based on their logistics performance. India currently records relatively higher logistics costs at 13-14 per cent of the GDP while it is 8-10 per cent for most of the mature economies. The sector is highly fragmented and unorganised. The regulatory environment is complex due to multiple regulations governed by various stakeholders. For example, there are over 20 government agencies; 37 export promotion councils; 500 certifications; 200 shipping agencies; 36 logistics services; 129 Inland Container Depots and 168 Container Freight Stations. The logistics sector is also heavily dependent on road transport. There is also a low level of technology adoption among various stakeholders. The high indirect costs due to unpredictable supply chains and poor first and last mile connectivity add to the logistics cost. Since 2014, when the Modi government came to power, there has been much emphasis on improving logistics, through initiatives like Sagarmala for shipping, Bharatmala for road and UDAN for aviation. In October 2021, PM Gati Shakti was launched as a National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity to bring together 16 ministries, including railways and roadways, for integrated planning and coordinated implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects. The National Logistics Policy and Gati Shakti will work as double engine for logistics. The policy is, therefore, an example of inter-ministerial collaboration which is designed to help in integrating the supply chain. This is because the policy seeks to pave the way for India to become a logistics hub by providing seamlessly integrated multiple modes of transportation by leveraging technology, processes and skilled manpower. More importantly, the policy will spur investment across the logistics sector. Stakeholders feel there has to be alignment of the policy across all States to be effective. The trade is confident that an empowering provision will follow soon for effective implementation of the policy at 'cheetah' speed. The policy will not only bring down logistics costs, but also give a fillip to international trade, help in making India 'atmanirbhar' or self-reliant, usher in prosperity and present new opportunities to startups.

The policy would be highly beneficial to the farmers of the country, helping them to take their produce to the markets at a faster pace and reduce wastage and delay. This would bring down prices. A Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) has been prepared as an integrated portal in which information about the location of goods can be obtained on a real-time basis with considerable ease.

Privatising Public Sector Banks is a dangerous move

REFLEX ACTION

Prabhat Patnaik

There are fundamental objections to the plan of the government to privatise at least some of the public sector banks. They centre around the fact that such a move will change the pattern of deployment of credit, away from productive activities towards speculation, away from peasant agriculture towards big business (with dangerous implications for peasant viability, food security and employment), and away from domestic to global destinations.

These objections are well-known and have been much discussed, and their pertinence has been underscored by the fact that Indian public sector banks were completely untouched during the "sub-prime-lending crisis" of 2008; but the government, concerned more with pleasing domestic and foreign big business than with the nation's well-being, predictably ignores them. My purpose here however is not to reiterate these objections; it is to point to another serious danger from privatisation which has been less discussed and which the country can ill-afford to ignore. During the dirigiste period, bank loans were used primarily to fulfil short-term credit needs, such as to finance inventory-holding in trading and industrial establishments, while long-term financial needs, for fixed capital formation, were fulfilled through a set of specialised financial institutions that had been set up just for this purpose. These institutions got their funds from government sources, such as the profits of the Reserve Bank of India, and gave loans at low interest rates, lower than the rates that the banks charged, and often even at negative real interest rates (i.e., the nominal rates they charged were lower than the rate of inflation) in order to encourage investment.

With "liberalisation" however this entire arrangement changed. The earlier specialised financial institutions disappeared in their old form, some like IDBI converting themselves to banks. Long-term financial needs of units were now supposed to be met through the capital market, from where also whatever financial institutions existed for giving long-term loans, were to raise their funds. But if an investment project was not profitable enough, or was too risky, then capitalists, instead of approaching the market, started approaching public sector banks even for long-term loans. And the banks have ended up giving large loans, especially for infrastructure projects, with the government pushing them to do so. As a result, the public sector banks, precisely because the government can arm-twist them into giving the loans it wants them to, have developed balance sheets that portend danger.

Banks obtain their resources from the deposits of the public which can be withdrawn by the public at a moment's notice. If a significant part of these resources is used for giving loans for long-term investment, then in effect the banks are "borrowing short to lend long", which exposes them to a potential illiquidity crisis. If many depositors

decide suddenly to withdraw their deposits, then the bank collapses; and even if only a few depositors wish to withdraw, and word gets around that the bank may face illiquidity, then there is a run on the bank making it collapse. To prevent such a possibility, banks whose liabilities are short-term, generally hold assets too that are short-term; since short-term assets, by definition, can be liquidated without involving much loss of value, the danger posed to a bank by a sudden withdrawal of deposits is thereby minimised. But if the assets are long-term, then their sudden sale involves a substantial loss, which therefore makes a sudden withdrawal of deposits from the bank much more difficult to negotiate.

The public sector banks have not just given loans for the acquisition oblong-term assets; much of the loans they have given are for infrastructure projects, which have a long gestation period, where time and cost-overruns are common, and where profits appear, if at all, only after a long period of time. The fact that a good part of such loans can be counted among the "on-performing assets" of the banks should come as no surprise. But even that part which is not officially counted as NPA, nonetheless falls under the category of "stressed assets". Thus the public sector banks have been pressurised by the government, not just into giving long-term loans but into giving "stressed loans". They are in short sitting on top of a volcano that can erupt at any time. The reason it has not yet erupted and continues to remain dormant is because these banks are government-owned; the public whose deposits have been used for such financing is not panicky: it has the confidence that if the banks face a crisis, the government that owns them will necessarily come to their rescue. And this confidence is precisely what prevents the banks from facing a crisis.

Everywhere in the world crises of the financial system have arisen when privately owned financial institutions have developed over time an asset liability mismatch. The East Asian financial crisis towards the end of the last century provides a classic example. Take the case of the South Korean banks. They had attracted foreign currency deposits, and used the proceeds to make loans domestically for long-term investment projects. This meant a double mismatch between their assets and liabilities: first, they were "borrowing short to lend long", i.e. using resources garnered through bank deposits to finance investment projects; and, second, they were borrowing in foreign currency to finance projects that were themselves not foreign exchange earning. Inevitably, the crisis came, and,

when it did, it was particularly severe. Even the financial crisis in the United States in 2008 was a reflection of such a mismatch. During the Great Depression the Roosevelt administration had passed the Glass-Steagall Act in 1933 that had strictly separated commercial banking from investment banking. Commercial banks, being deposit-financed, were confined to giving short-term loans, while investment banks, not being deposit-financed could engage themselves in giving loans for stock-market activities. This Act was in response to the fact that the Depression had seen a run on banks as they accepted deposits but used their resources on the stock market, a run that had been stemmed only through considerable effort on the part of the US government, including Roosevelt's famous "fire-side chat" broadcasts.

Glass-Steagall however was repealed in 1999; and that created the conditions under which the financial system once more faced a severe crisis. To be sure, it was not the only factor behind the crisis; there was a serious underestimation of lending risks across the spectrum, which is why an investment bank like Lehmann Brothers went down. But given this underestimation of risks, the fact that commercial banks too were exposed to the financial crisis was because they had been giving loans against assets that had earlier, i.e., during the dirigiste period, not been part of their usual business.

In India public sector banks too have been exposed to unprecedented risks because of government arm-twisting; they have so far been spared because of the depositors' faith in the public sector. If they are privatised then the volcano on which they are sitting will erupt and the depositors will be hugely and adversely affected. This will not just affect the depositors; it will have a serious and damaging impact on the Indian economy.

It may be thought that the depositors will entertain the belief, even in the event of privatisation, that the government will come to the rescue of the privatised bank just as it would have done if the bank had remained in the public sector; and that this belief itself will prevent any crisis affecting the banks. But this belief has very little justification: the kind of political pressure that can be mounted on the government if it is the direct owner of the bank, will be absent if the bank is privately-owned.

In short, given the asset-liability mismatch of the public sector banks that has been forced on them by the government, its washing its hands off them by privatising them will be an act of utter irresponsibility. It will not only expose the ordinary depositors of the country to the possibility of severe financial loss, but will also eliminate for a long time the public's faith in the banking system, causing a shift in its asset-preference towards currency hoards and away from bank-deposits. This would be a retrograde move that would damage for long the prospects of development. (IPA)



The Goddess Durga idol nearing completion at the ancestral home of Rani Rasmoni--Arijit Ganguly

India ahead of China as largest EV two-wheeler market

FOCUS

K Raveendran

A major hurdle in the shift to electric vehicles has been the price disadvantage of EV units. But this is expected to change soon, as electric vehicles are expected to hit price parity with petrol and diesel engines by next year.

The shift is being made possible in view of the increasing government incentives, vehicle models and variants, and advancements in battery technology. As a result, a significant shift in sales toward electric mobility is expected in much of Asia, including India, by 2025, according to an assessment by global consultancy McKinsey. Asia is expected to be the largest market for EVs, with an addressable market worth of \$700 billion to \$750 billion, led by China and to a certain extent India. Asia continues to remain a global battery manufacturing hub with new countries like Indonesia joining the ranks, through leveraging its abundant nickel reserves. The rising demand is making EV battery sector more attractive, with a new trend of OEMs undertaking backward integration in the batter sector.

New entrants entering the original equipment manufacturing (OEM) market have been drawn by the attractive incentive schemes. For instance, motorcycle brand Hero has already started supplying electric

two-wheelers, with Ather, a new electric-scooter entrant, also planning to launch. India overtook China to become the largest market for electric two-wheelers (E2Ws) in 2017. With the increasing cost-competitiveness of electric models and regulators incentivizing consumer adoption, E2Ws will become a predominant mode of transport in the region.

McKinsey modelling shows that by 2030, India and Indonesia will become the second- and third-largest E2W markets in the world after China, growing at more than 60 percent annually. Such development will translate into an electrification rate of two-wheelers at around 36 percent in India and ASEAN by 2030, compared with less than 1 percent today.

Uttar Pradesh held the highest share in EV sales in 2021, followed by Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. UP also dominated the three-wheeler segment, while Karnataka and Maharashtra led the two-wheeler

segment and four-wheeler segment, respectively.

As per India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA), the Indian EV industry is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 36 percent. As population rises and demand for vehicles grow, dependence on conventional energy resources is not considered a sustainable option as India imports close to 80 percent of its crude oil requirements.

NITI Aayog aims to achieve EV sales penetration of 70 percent for all commercial cars, 30 percent for private cars, 40 percent for buses and 80 percent for two and three-wheelers by 2030. Over the last three years, over 500,000 EVs were registered in India, according to the Ministry of Heavy Industries. EVs recorded robust growth in 2021, supported by the implementation of favourable policies and programmes by the government. The electric two-wheeler market is controlled by Hero Electric, Okinawa and Ather Energy, among them

holding a combined market share of 64 percent. Hero Electric has a market share of 36 percent followed by Okinawa with 21 percent and Ather Energy with 11.1 percent. In the passenger vehicle segment, Tata Motors enjoys a commanding position in electric vehicle space with a market share of 71 percent, led by their two key models, Nexon and Tigor EV. The second slot is held by MG Motors which claims to offer the longest-range of 439 km on a single charge. Other manufacturers have announced their models.

The EV push has opened up a plethora of business opportunities across three key segments - mobility, infrastructure and energy. These include opportunities in EV franchising, OEM market, battery infrastructure, solar vehicle charging and battery swapping technology among several others. According to NITI Aayog, the complete transition to EVs requires a total investment of over Rs 19 lakh crore in EVs, battery infrastructure and charging infrastructure.

According to the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), the EV industry could add 10 million direct jobs by 2030 which would also create 50 million indirect jobs in the sector. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword												
1		2		3		4		5		6		7
		8						9				
10								11				
				12				13				
						14				15		16
17				18				19		20		
								21			22	
23	24			25				26				
27								28				
29										30		

ACROSS						DOWN					
1	Thunder	god				1	Extreme	fear			
4	Promising					2	Egg-shaped				
8	Annoy					3	Transmit	in stages			
9	Musical	instrument				4	Fish	eggs			
10	Actual					5	Abnormally	fat			
11	Requires					6	Turf				
12	Crippled					7	Acceptance				
14	Tree					11	Stair	handrail	post		
15	Do	wrong				13	Measuring				
17	Male	sheep					instrument				
19	Number					16	Rue				
21	Dash					18	Mechanical	mover			
23	Thesplan					20	Nostrils				
26	Bellow					22	Not	any			
27	Needy					23	Quick	to learn			
28	Marsh					24	Dove's	call			
29	Lacerated					25	Metal-bearing	rock			
30	Religious										
	denomination										

SUDOKU:3652

			9					8			
	5			6							
4				5		7	2			9	
9					5						
7				9		4				5	
					7					4	
1		8	4			9					3
						8		7			
	6						4				

Yesterday's Solution3651

4	6	9	1	7	2	8	3	5
5	1	3	8	9	4	7	2	6
8	7	2	6	5	3	1	9	4
7	9	1	4	3	5	2	6	8
2	8	4	7	6	1	9	5	3
6	3	5	9	2	8	4	7	1
3	5	8	2	1	9	6	4	7
1	2	6	3	4	7	5	8	9
9	4	7	5	8	6	3	1	2

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution1660

R	A	P		F	A	C	A	D	E
A		A	V	I	D		D	O	N
P		W		R	O	T	A	T	E
T		I	N	D	E	R		G	M
	C		Y		E	M	E	R	Y
D	E	F	E	R		O		Y	
O		L		A	B	A	T	E	D
O	P	I	A	T	E		E		U
R	O	E		E	D	E	N		T
S	T	R	E	S	S		D	A	Y

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.

Strong possibility of Oppn parties fighting 2024 polls together: Nitish

NEW DELHI, SEPT 26 /--/ There is a strong possibility of opposition parties coming together to fight the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar said on Monday, stressing that he has had good talks with them and many will join hands gradually.

Speaking to reporters, the Janata Dal-United (JD-U) leader also made light of the BJP's repeated swipe at the Opposition over its unity talks, saying the ruling party has many problems of its own. "All they can do is speak day



and night," Nitish said. "Many parties will join hands gradually and there is a strong possibility that they can fight the 2024 polls together," he said, adding that he has had good talks with leaders of different parties. Asked if the Trinamool Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party, both having strong reservations against the Congress, will also be a part of such a formation, he said once an agreement is reached in the Opposition about an alliance, only then something concrete can be said. At the same time, the Bihar chief minister added that the media will be aware of all the leaders he has met. Nitish had met AAP leader and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal during his last visit to the national capital. TMC supremo and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee had also said recently that she together with Nitish, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav and SP supremo Akhilesh Yadav will defeat the BJP. The JD-U chief had met Congress president Sonia Gandhi along with RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav on Sunday. During an earlier visit, he had met many other Opposition leaders. Nitish, NCP leader Sharad Pawar and other prominent opposition leaders had at a rally in Fatehabad on Sunday called for a new alliance that includes the Congress for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, stressing that a bipolar contest will ensure the BJP's defeat. (PTI)

India should make efforts to be among global leaders in 4th industrial revolution: Prez

DHARWAD, SEPT 26 /--/ The world is now moving towards the fourth industrial revolution, and India has to make relentless efforts to secure a leading position on the world stage in this connection, President Droupadi Murmu said on Monday. Murmu was speaking at the inauguration of the new campus of the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT)-Dharwad here. "The country and the world is changing rapidly. Through the Digital India Mission, our country is experiencing digital revolution, but to reap benefits of this revolution, we will have to further encourage our research and innovation," Murmu said. Highlighting that today's world belongs to 'metaverse', she said, on the strength of artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality, useful changes can be made. "The world is now moving towards the fourth industrial revolution which has the potential to raise income levels and improve the quality of life for the world community. Therefore, we have to make relentless



President Droupadi Murmu wearing a Mysore 'peta' during the inauguration of the Mysuru Dasara Festival, at Chamundi Hills in Mysuru. Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai is also seen

efforts to secure India's leading position on the world stage by contributing in this revolution," the President added. The fourth industrial revolution is a term coined over the last few years and characterised by the convergence of emerging technology domains, including nanotechnology, biotechnology, and advanced digital technologies like 3D printing, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things (IoT). Karnataka Governor Thawarchand Gehlot, chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, Union minister Pralhad Joshi and IIIT-Dharwad Board of Governors chairperson Sudha Murty were among those present.

With IIIT and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), along with availability of technical human resources in the region, and the IT city Bengaluru too in the state, Murmu suggested for developing a knowledge network. "If companies, institutes together work on research and experiments, the success is assured," Murmu added. (PTI)

Gunman opens fire in Moscow school; 13 dead, 23 wounded

MOSCOW, SEPT 26 /--/ A gunman opened fire in a school in central Russia on Monday, killing 13 people and wounding 23 others before shooting himself dead, authorities said. The shooting took place in School No 88 in Izhevsk, a city 960 kilometres (600 miles) east of Moscow in the Udmurtia region. Russia's Investigative Committee identified the gunman as 34-year-old Artyom Kazantsev, a graduate of the same school, and said he was wearing a black t-shirt bearing Nazi symbols. No details about his motives have been released. The Governor of Udmurtia, Alexander Brechalov, said the gunman, who he said was registered as a patient at a psychiatric facility, killed himself after the attack. Brechalov said nine out of the 13 victims were children and so were 20 of those wounded. Earlier, Russia's Investigative committee said seven adults were among those wounded and seven out of 13 victims were children. The conflicting statements could not be immediately reconciled. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov described the shooting as a terrorist act and said Russian President Vladimir Putin has given all the necessary orders to the relevant authorities.

President Putin deeply mourns deaths of people and children in the school, where a terrorist act took place, Peskov told reporters Monday. The school educates children between grades one and 11. It has been evacuated and the area around it has been cordoned off, the governor said. Russia's National Guard said Kazantsev used two non-lethal handguns adapted to fire real bullets. The guns were not registered with the authorities. A criminal probe into the incident has been launched on charges of multiple murder and illegal possession of firearms. Izhevsk, a city of 640,000, is located west of the Ural mountains in central Russia. (AP)

NEWS BRIEFS

Vistadome coach for Darjeeling

DARJEELING: Tourists will now have a better opportunity to enjoy breathtaking views during their journey up the meandering tracks to Darjeeling from New Jalpaiguri in north Bengal with the introduction of a vistadome coach and a restaurant car in a tri-weekly train which started on Monday. The introduction of the new train of the heritage Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) before Durga puja and Diwali is expected to boost tourism in the hills, a senior railway official said. The train, run by the North Frontier Railway (NFR), will traverse about 88 km to reach the Queen of Hills from New Jalpaiguri in the plains. The train has a vistadome coach offering great views and a restaurant car that will serve an array of food and beverages, NFR general manager Anshul Gupta said. (PTI)

PoK issue should have been decided during 1971 Indo-Pak war: Rajnath

SHIMLA, SEPT 26 /--/ Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said that the issue of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) should have been decided during the 1971 war between India and the neighbouring country.

The defence minister said this while addressing a function to honour martyrs' families at Badoli in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. "We have recently marked the Golden Jubilee of victory of 1971 war. The 1971 war will be remembered in the history as the war fought for the humanity instead of property, possession or power," Singh said. "There is only one regret. The issue of PoK should have been decided at that time itself," he said. The defence minister also attended a similar function at Nadaun in Hamirpur district. In Kangra, Singh also shed light on the Centre's unwavering resolve to make the country 'Aatmanirbhar' and the progress achieved due to the measures taken to realise the

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision. "Earlier, India was known as a defence importer. Today, it is among one of the top 25 defence exporters in the world. From about Rs 900 crore eight years ago, defence exports have crossed Rs 13,000 crore. We are hopeful that the defence exports will touch Rs 35,000 crore by 2025 and the target of Rs 2.7 lakh crore set for 2047 will be met," he said.

While maintaining that India has never attacked any country, nor has it captured an inch of foreign land, he assured the nation that if any attempt is ever made to disturb the harmony in India, a befitting reply will be given. "India is a peace-loving country, but it should not be mistaken with being coward or afraid of war. At a time when we were dealing with Covid-19, we had to face the tension on the northern border with China. The courage of our soldiers during the Galwan incident proved that no matter how big the power is, India will never bow down," he said. (PTI)

LOCAL NEWS

PS Bambooflat team cracks burglary case, nabs burglars

PORT BLAIR, SEPT 26 /--/ Working professionally and efficiently, PS Bambooflat team cracks a Burglary case which had taken place in a central government establishment and recovered part of the stolen properties. Three burglars and two receivers of stolen properties were arrested. On 13TH Septe 2022, a written complaint letter was received regarding theft of electrical & sanitary items from a Central Government Establishment. Upon this, a case was registered against unknown persons in PS Bambooflat. After registration of the case, multiple teams consisting of SI Calvin, SI S. Tejeshwar Rao, HCs Ashok Roy, R.K. Rathore, Sharfudeen, PCs 1418 S. Shiva Kumar, Rajdhari Yadav were constituted under the close supervision of Insp. Mohd. Sameer, SHO PS Bambooflat. Close surveillance was kept over scrap dealers and other petty offenders. Also, the teams worked relentlessly and apprehended three persons namely M. Vignesh S/o Shri A. L. Madurai Veeran, (23) Yrs, R/o Shore Point, Akash Kerketta, S/o Shri Antherias Kerketta, (23) Yrs, R/o Dhanikhadi and P. Jagpath Rao, S/o Shri Sri Ramlu, (23) Yrs, R/o Tsunami Pahad, Bambooflat, who had committed the offence. They had sold the stolen properties to S. Chander Rao, S/o Shri Prakash Rao, (35) Yrs, R/o Narsaiah Pahad, Bambooflat and P. Laxman Rao, S/o Shri Barikannu, (38) Yrs, R/o Narsaiah Pahad, Bambooflat. Later, 03 Nos. ceiling fans were recovered from the procession of S. Chander Rao and P. Laxman Rao. Thereafter, all the accused persons were arrested under appropriate sections of law and they were produced before the Hon'ble Court. The entire operation has been carried out under the close supervision of Shri Saurabh Chandra, SDPO (Bambooflat). The general public is requested to share information pertaining to any crime or other illegal activities to Police at 112, 03192-232100, 03192-233077 & 03192-258411. The identity of the informant will be kept secret.

Diglipur Police seizes 1.4 kg

From page-1
Thereafter, team went in search of the receiver. Team searched the house of Biswajit Sarkar and recovered some packing material, weighing scale and further approximately 201 gm of ganja. In total 1.4 kgs of ganja was recovered. Accordingly two FIRs were registered at PS Diglipur under NDPS Act and both the accused persons were arrested.

The district police follow a policy of zero tolerance towards any organized crime. The general public is requested to pass and share any credible information pertaining to any crime or illegal activities to their nearest police station or over phone No. 100, 112 & 03192-273344. The identity of the informers will be kept secret and will also be suitably rewarded.

RAJASTHAN CRISIS

Sonia seeks written report on developments from Maken, Kharge

Cong says Gehlot-loyalist MLAs' move to call separate meet 'indiscipline'

NEW DELHI, SEPT 26 /--/ Congress observers Mallikarjun Kharge and Ajay Maken on Monday briefed party president Sonia Gandhi about the developments in Rajasthan and are expected to submit a written report about the crisis in the party's state unit latest by Tuesday. Talking to reporters after a nearly one-and-a-half-hour-long meeting with Gandhi, AICC in-charge for Rajasthan Ajay Maken said the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting was organised with the consent of Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, and termed the act of the MLAs loyal to him to hold a parallel meeting as "indiscipline". AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal was also present during the meeting. Maken said it was "unfortunate" that the CLP meeting could not be held.

"Kharge ji and I have apprised the Congress president of the CLP meeting in Rajasthan. The Congress president has sought a written report on the entire chronology, which we will submit by late night or tomorrow," he said. The senior leader said the Congress president had asked the observers to meet

all MLAs separately. There was a clear direction by the Congress president that "we speak to every MLA and submit a report, and then the Congress president would have taken a call after speaking to everyone", he specified, adding this was made clear to everyone. The CLP meeting was called

conflict of interest, what is," he said in a reference to Gehlot. Maken said the MLAs loyal to Gehlot wanted to meet in groups as opposed to the high command's order to meet them separately, saying there was no precedent to such an act in the party. "In a CLP meet, one-on-one



to pass a resolution authorising the Congress president to take a decision on Gehlot's successor. But according to Maken, the representatives of the MLAs loyal to the chief minister put forward three conditions, including that the decision on the next chief minister would be taken by the new party president. "How is it possible that the person moving the resolution authorises the Congress president... that person wants to fight AICC president polls and if he wins the polls, he would decide on it? If this is not

meeting is held so that they (MLAs) can express themselves freely. They also said the chief minister should be chosen from among those MLAs loyal to Ashok Gehlot in 2020, to which we said that we will convey their views to the Congress president, but no conditions can be attached to a resolution. We have given the briefing to Sonia ji and will give a written report," he said. "When a CLP meeting is held, holding a parallel meeting of MLAs is prima facie indiscipline," the AICC in-charge for Rajasthan added. (PTI)

Govt extends FTP by 6 months

NEW DELHI, SEPT 26 /--/ The Union government has decided to postpone the release of the new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) and extend the existing one by six months on account of global uncertainties and currency fluctuations. The government was scheduled to announce the new FTP by the end of September. The current policy was to end on September 30. Additional secretary in the department of commerce, Amit Yadav, said there were demands from

different quarters, including industry associations and export promotion councils, to extend the policy and not introduce the new one at this time. They have stated that currently there are challenges like global uncertainties and currency fluctuations. There was also a view to align the rollout of the new policy with the new financial year. A notification in this regard will be issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT). (PTI)

Kejriwal hosts sanitation worker's family from Gujarat over lunch

NEW DELHI, SEPT 26 /--/ Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal hosted a sanitation worker and his family from Gujarat over lunch at his residence here on Monday, officials said.

Harsh Solanki, a sanitation worker from Gujarat, along with his family, also visited a Delhi government school and a hospital. Solanki presented a portrait of B R Ambedkar to Kejriwal, the officials said. During the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) town hall with sanitation workers, predominantly from the Dalit community, in Gujarat's Ahmedabad on Sunday, Solanki had invited Kejriwal to have dinner at his house. In a statement, Kejriwal had said he would host Solanki and his family at his residence over lunch. "It was a very happy moment for us. They sat with my family and we had lunch. I am thankful to them for coming this far to meet me," the Delhi chief minister told reporters. Solanki said it was a

Cong, BJP dub it as 'political stunt'

proud moment for him to have been hosted by a political leader. "In the last 75 years, he (Kejriwal) is the first leader to have called a Dalit for lunch. It is a big thing for me. I also saw schools and hospitals and it felt very good. I had never thought that I would be standing with the chief minister sir," he said. However, Opposition BJP and Congress on Monday dubbed the Delhi chief minister's gesture a "political stunt" and accused him of "hypocrisy" instead of taking care of Dalits living in the city. Kejriwal is not a well-wisher of Dalits and sanitation workers, charged BJP MLA and Leader of Opposition

in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri. He said even the status of Corona warrior was not extended to sanitation workers during the pandemic. "About 82 per cent of the amount allocated for the welfare of these sanitation workers in the Delhi government budget was not spent. Now by inviting a Dalit of Gujarat to Delhi, AAP is indulging in gimmick and hypocrisy," he charged. Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar also termed the AAP convener's move to invite a Dalit family from Gujarat for lunch at his residence a "political stunt" to "mislead the Dalit community." "Many Dalit sanitation workers serving during Covid pandemic died due to the virus in Delhi but the Kejriwal government did not honour its commitment of giving Rs 1 crore compensation to the kin of the deceased," he claimed. (PTI)



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal embraces sanitation worker Harsh Solanki from Gujarat at his residence, in New Delhi

Twelve arrested after clashes outside Iranian Embassy in London

LONDON, SEPT 26/--/British police said on Monday that 12 people were arrested and at least five police officers were seriously injured after violent disorder broke out during protests outside the Iranian Embassy in London. Large crowds had gathered all week outside the compound to protest the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in custody in Iran after she was detained by the country's morality police. The Metropolitan Police force said most protesters had been peaceful, but on Sunday a group of activists sought to confront police and other protesters with different views.

Police said bottles and other items were thrown at officers trying to protect the embassy building, and that protesters also targeted the nearby Islamic Centre of England. At least five officers were hospitalised with injuries including broken bones, police said.

Amini was arrested for allegedly breaking headscarf rules and died on September 16. The Iranian police said she died of a heart attack and wasn't mistreated, but her family has cast doubt on that account. The London clashes came as protests over her death spread across dozens of Iranian cities, towns and villages. Iran's Foreign Ministry said Sunday it summoned Britain's ambassador to protest what it described as a hostile atmosphere created by London-based Farsi language media outlets. The ministry alleged the news outlets have provoked disturbances and the spread of riots in Iran at the top of their programmes. (AP)

Six Pak Army personnel, including two officers, killed in helicopter crash in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, SEPT 26/--/Six Pakistan Army officials, including two Majors, were killed in a helicopter crash in southwestern Balochistan province, the military said on Monday, the second such incident after another military helicopter crashed in the same province last month. The crash occurred near Khost in the Harnai district of the province on Sunday night during a flying mission, it said.

All the 'six personnel on board, including 2 pilots' were killed in the crash, the Army said.

No reason for the crash was given. The accident comes more than a month after a similar incident occurred in Balochistan on August 1 when a Pakistan Army helicopter crashed, killing all six personnel, including a Lieutenant General, on board. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the Pakistani military, said on Monday that 39-year-old Major Khurram Shahzad (pilot) and 30-year-old Major Muhammad Muneeb Afzal (pilot) were among those killed in the crash.

The funeral prayers of the six army personnel were offered at Quetta Garrison, according to the ISPR. Balochistan corps commander as well as senior military and civil officials attended the funeral. Their bodies are now being sent to their native towns where they will be buried with full military honours, the army said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said he was deeply grieved and prayed for the deceased and their family members. He said the entire nation shared the grief of the bereaved. President Arif Alvi also expressed grief over the incident and extended condolences to the victims' families.

Former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party leader Fawad Chaudhry said helicopter flying was getting dangerous in the country, adding that it required "engineering evaluation". "Too many crashes [] rest in peace bravehearts. All were too young to die, he said.

Balochistan, bordering Iran and Afghanistan, is home to a long-running violent insurgency. Baloch insurgent groups have previously carried out several attacks targeting security personnel and the USD 60 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor projects. (PTI)



British Indian medic warns of ‘pandemic of misinformation’ around COVID vaccines

LONDON, SEPT 26/--/A leading Indian-origin consultant cardiologist based in the UK on Monday issued a stark warning of what he fears is a "pandemic of misinformation" around the long-term side effects of some COVID-19 vaccines. Dr Aseem Malhotra, a National Health Service (NHS) trained cardiologist who has had two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, has called for the suspension of government mandated mRNA vaccine rollout to fully investigate serious side effects. Having observed a rise in out of hospital cardiac arrests and heart attacks, the medic also fears that an mRNA vaccine was the likely "contributory factor" in the sudden death last year of his father, leading UK-based general practitioner (GP) Dr Kailash Chand. "Re-analysis of randomised controlled trials using the messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) technology suggests a greater risk of serious adverse events from the vaccines than

being hospitalised from COVID-19," writes Malhotra in peer-reviewed Journal of Insulin Resistance'. "Pharmacovigilance systems and real-world safety data, coupled with plausible mechanisms of harm, are deeply concerning, especially in relation to cardiovascular safety. Mirroring a potential signal from the Pfizer Phase 3 trial, a significant rise in cardiac arrest calls to ambulances in England was seen in 2021, with similar data emerging from Israel in the 16-39-year-old age group, he writes.

The two-part paper, entitled Curing the pandemic of misinformation on COVID-19 mRNA vaccines through real evidence-based medicine' and based on months of research, calls for raw data from clinical trials to be released for independent scrutiny. "It cannot

be said that the consent to receive these agents was fully informed, as is required ethically and legally. A pause and reappraisal of global vaccination policies for



COVID-19 is long overdue, the paper concludes. Malhotra's assessment has been backed by other leading members of the global medical community, including Jay Bhattacharya, Professor of Medicine at the University of Stanford, and Sherif Sultan, Professor of

Vascular Surgery. "Dr Malhotra's paper calls for a pause in the use of the vaccine in younger people, such as the one recently adopted by Danish public health authorities and the Florida department of public health in the United States," said Prof. Bhattacharya. "He calls for investigation of side effect profiles of mRNA vaccines and for a halt to any vaccine mandate programs involving COVID vaccines. These papers should be considered carefully by all public health authorities who seek to adopt principles of evidence-based medicine in their recommendations to the public regarding the COVID mRNA vaccines, he said.

Prof. Sultan said Malhotra's analysis is a matter of global concern amid the lack of long-term safety evaluation of mRNA

vaccines. "These findings raise concerns regarding vaccine-induced undetected severe cardiovascular side effects and underscore the established causal relationship between vaccines and myocarditis, a frequent cause of unexpected cardiac arrest in young individuals, said Sultan. "Surveillance of potential vaccine side effects and COVID-19 outcomes to identify public health trends and promptly investigate potential underlying causes needs immediate attention, he said.

Given the declining virulence of the infection and mounting evidence of vaccine-related harms, there can be no justification to continued mass roll-out of booster programs given the short-term risks from the vaccine likely outweigh the benefits for the majority of the population and we remain ignorant of the long-term risk to health, added Dr Bob Gill, a GP and documentary producer. (PTI)

Egyptian cleric revered by Muslim Brotherhood dies at 96

DOHA, SEPT 26/--/Youssef al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian cleric who was seen as the spiritual leader of the pan-Arab Muslim Brotherhood, died on Monday at the age of 96, according to his official website. He died in the Gulf Arab nation of Qatar, where he had been living in exile following the military's overthrow of a Muslim Brotherhood-led government in Egypt in 2013. Al-Qaradawi had been tried and sentenced to death in absentia in Egypt.

For many years while living in exile, he had a popular talk show on the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera network and often weighed in on controversial political topics. He supported suicide bombings and other attacks by Palestinians against Israel and also voiced support for the Iraqi insurgency that erupted after the U.S.-led invasion of 2003 toppled Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

But he also backed the Muslim Brotherhood's embrace of democratic elections and was a staunch critic of more radical groups, like Islamic State. He also issued a religious ruling against female circumcision, which is still widely practiced in Egypt. He had strongly criticized the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, calling on all Muslim nations at the time to prepare to fight the Americans there if the Iraqis fail to drive them out.

By opening our ports, our airports and our land, we are participating in the war, al-Qaradawi said in a pointed critique of U.S.-allied Arab governments. We will be cursed by history because we have helped the Americans. Qatar, which hosted him for decades, also hosts American troops and now serves as the forward headquarters of the U.S. military's Central Command.

The Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in Egypt nearly a century ago and has branches across the region, played a major role in the 2011 uprisings that rocked the Middle East and rose to power in Egypt's first democratic elections, after the overthrow of long-ruling autocrat Hosni Mubarak. Al-Qaradawi made a triumphant return to Egypt for the first time in decades in February 2011, addressing tens of thousands of supporters in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the epicenter of the pro-democracy uprising that toppled Mubarak. But the year-long rule in Egypt of President Mohammed Morsi, a senior Muslim

Brotherhood figure, proved extremely divisive, and the military removed the him from power in 2013 amid mass protests. Morsi died in 2019 after collapsing in court.

Al-Qaradawi remained a staunch critic of Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sissi, who led the overthrow of the Brotherhood and who rights groups say has established an even more authoritarian government than the one led by Mubarak.

Egypt considers the Brotherhood a terrorist group and has arrested thousands of its members. Ahmed Mussa, a prominent pro-government TV host, called al-Qaradawi the biggest inciter of terrorism and blamed him for attacks inside Egypt.

Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates included al-Qaradawi on a list of dozens of organisations and individuals that they sanctioned for alleged terrorism in 2017 as part of a diplomatic dispute with Qatar, which denied the allegations.

In 2009, Israel's Shin Bet internal security agency accused al-Qaradawi of allocating USD 21 million to a charity funded by the Islamic militant group Hamas to set up militant infrastructure in Jerusalem. Hamas, which was originally established as a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and now rules the Gaza Strip, denied the allegations.

Al-Qaradawi was born on Sept. 9, 1926 in a small village in Egypt's Nile Delta. His official biography claims he memorized the Quran before the age of 10. He went on to study at Egypt's Al-Azhar University, the leading center of Sunni Muslim scholarship. He fled to Qatar in the early 1960s, when Egypt's then-president Gamal Abdel Nasser, an Arab nationalist, was waging a fierce crackdown on the Brotherhood, seeing it as a threat to his rule. A U.S. diplomatic cable from 2005 that was published by WikiLeaks said Qatar had given al-Qaradawi substantial properties, including villas, which he rents, and suggested he also had a substantial income. Qatar is a strong Brotherhood supporter. In Qatar, al-Qaradawi hosted a popular TV programme, Shariah and Life, in which he took calls from across the Muslim world, dispensing theological rulings and offering advice on everything from global politics to mundane aspects of daily life. (AP)

Ukrainians scared by Russia's preordained referendums

KYIV, SEPT 26/--/After seven months of war, many Ukrainians fear even more suffering and political repression as referendums orchestrated by the Kremlin portend Russia's imminent annexation of four occupied regions. Many residents fled the regions before the so-called referendums got underway, scared about being forced to vote or potentially being conscripted into the Russian army. Others described hiding behind closed doors, hoping to avoid having to answer to armed soldiers going door-to-door to collect votes. Petro Kobernik, who left the Russian-held southern city of Kherson just before the preordained voting began on Friday, said the prospect of living under Russian law and the escalating war made him and others extremely jittery about the future. The situation is changing rapidly, and people fear that they will be hurt either by the Russian military, or Ukrainian guerrillas and the advancing Ukrainian troops, Kobernik, 31, said in a telephone interview.

As some Russian officials brought ballots to neighbourhoods accompanied by armed police, Kobernik said his 70-year-old father shut the door of his private house in the village of Novotroitske part of Kherson and vowed not to let anyone in.

The referendums, denounced by Kyiv and its Western allies as rigged, are taking place in the Russian-controlled Luhansk and Kherson regions, and in occupied areas of the Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions.

They are widely viewed as a pretext for annexation, and Russian

authorities are expected to announce the regions as theirs once the vote ends on Tuesday. The Kremlin has used this tactic before. In 2014, it held a hastily called referendum in Ukraine's Crimea region to justify annexation of the Black Sea peninsula, a move that was denounced as illegitimate by most of the world.

Ukrainian authorities have told residents of the four Russian-occupied regions that they would face criminal punishment if they cast ballots and advised them to leave. Russian President Vladimir Putin, who began mobilising more troops for the war last week, said he's ready to use nuclear weapons to protect territory in a clear threat to Ukraine to halt its attempts to reclaim the regions. Putin's escalating rhetoric and politically risky decision to call up as many as 300,000 army reservists comes after Russians were hastily forced to retreat from large swaths of northeastern Ukraine earlier this month. A fierce Ukrainian counteroffensive continues in the country's east and south. Moscow-appointed governor of the southern Kherson region, Vladimir Saldo, vowed that Ukrainian attempts to derail the referendum by shelling the city won't succeed.

It's complicated because of security issues, but everything will be done to make the balloting safe for the voters and election officials, Saldo said in a video address. People are waiting to join Russia and want it done as quickly as possible. Moscow-backed separatists in the eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions claim that most residents of these territories have dreamed about joining Russia

ever since Russia's annexation of Crimea. But many residents there tell a different story. The streets are empty as people stay home, Marina Irkho, a 38-year-old resident of the Sea of Azov port city of Berdyansk said by phone. No one wants them to declare us part of Russia and start rounding up our men. She said that those who actively stood for Ukraine have left or gone into hiding, adding that many of the older people who supported Russia have stayed but feel scared.

Ukrainian guerrillas have continuously targeted Moscow-appointed officials in the occupied regions. Just a week before the referendum, a deputy head of the Berdyansk city administration and his wife who headed the city election commission were killed in an attack. Members of the Yellow Band guerrilla group named after Ukraine's yellow-and-blue national flag have spread leaflets threatening those who cast ballots and urged residents to send photos and video of people who vote to track them down later. The guerrillas also posted phone numbers of election commission chiefs in the Kherson region, calling on pro-Ukraine activists to make their life unbearable. Ukrainian officials say signs of the referendums' illegitimacy are all around. The Russians are seeing the citizens' fear and reluctance to vote, so they are forced to take people in, said Ivan Fedorov, the Ukrainian mayor of the Russia-held city of Melitopol, who was detained and held by the Russians before leaving the city. Groups of collaborators and Russians accompanied by armed troops go from one apartment to another, but

few people open the doors, Fedorov said.

The haste with which they organised that pseudo-referendum shows that they weren't going to even count the ballots in earnest. Larysa Vinohradova, a resident of the port city of Mariupol who left the city after the Russian invasion, said that many of her friends stayed because they had to take care of elderly parents refusing to flee. They don't stand for Russia, they want Mariupol to be part of Ukraine, and they are waiting for it, she said, bursting into tears. Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai, who left the region after it was swept by the Russian forces, said that residents fear that the Russians will round up more men in the region for military service following Putin's mobilisation order. The Russians are using this pseudo-referendum as a pretext for armed people to visit apartments and search for any remaining men to mobilise them and also look for anything suspicious and pro-Ukrainian, Haidai told The Associated Press. The swift Ukrainian counteroffensive has scared the Russians," he added.

Analysts say Putin is hoping to use the threat of military escalation to force Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy into negotiating with the Kremlin. The haste with which the referendums were called shows the weakness of the Kremlin, not its strength, said Volodymyr Fesenko, head of the Penta Center, an independent think tank based in Kyiv. "The Kremlin is struggling to find levers to influence the situation that has spun out of its control. (AP)



Dogs run with their owners during the "Run Fur Life" marathon in Pasig City, the Philippines yesterday. The "Run Fur Life" is a fundraising event for the benefit of maltreated, abandoned, and homeless dogs and also aims to promote animal welfare and responsible pet ownership

Rohit keeping the faith in Bhuvneshwar and Harshal

HYDERABAD, SEPT 26 /--/ India skipper Rohit Sharma has backed pacers Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Harshal Patel to hit form ahead of the T20 World Cup. Following a disappointing Asia Cup campaign, the Indian team had something to cheer as it won the three-match series against Australia 2-1 after clinching a six-wicket win in the third game here on Sunday. However, both Bhuvneshwar and Harshal, who made a comeback from injury, leaked runs in the series, ending with an economy rate of 12 plus. It's important that we give him (Bhuvi) that space because when you have a guy like him in the team and the quality that he brings, we know that he's had more good days than the bad days in the last so many years. We've been working on some plans, and hopefully, we can give him more options to bowl in the death. And then he'll be as good as he was before," said Rohit in the post match media interaction. Despite the woeful run, Rohit said Bhuvneshwar is



not short on confidence. I don't see that he is short in confidence. It's time for us to show that faith in him and keep backing his skillset. From our side, we are trying to work out what are the things we can do because when you're bowling in the death you can't be predictable. You need to have options to bowl on both sides of the ground and set the field accordingly. And someone with that experience it'll be easy for him to grasp all that knowledge. Harshal, who is coming off a long injury layoff, also struggled, giving away 99 runs in eight overs in the three games but Rohit said the death overs specialist is not being judged on this series. Harshal is an important player for us without a doubt. Coming back after an injury is never easy. He missed cricket for close to two months. It's not easy (to come back), so we've not judged him on how he is performing in these three games, because we know his quality. "He has bowled some really tough overs for us in the past and also for his franchise. It's important to keep showing that

faith and I'm sure that you know he's also trying to rectify those mistakes and he's not too far from his best. Assessing the team's performance in the series, Rohit said We want to tighten in all departments. I know our batting has been brilliant in the last eight or nine games that we played since Asia Cup. "But we still want us to be more clinical, more aggressive, you know and play with that aggression. We want to keep doing that. While the batting unit performed well, the bowlers struggled and the fielding from the side was also substandard. "Bowling is the main focus. Fielding is one aspect which will never stop. We want to keep improving as a fielding unit all the time." Suryakumar Yadav played a special 69-run knock to pave the way for India's victory alongside Virat Kohli, who also scored a half-century in the third game. When it comes to Surya we all know his quality. He can play the shots all over the ground. And that is what makes him special. He is just getting better and better. (PTI)

GAME NOTES

Assam Cricket Association

rain-ready' for India-South Africa T20

GUWAHATI, SEPT 26 /--/ The Assam Cricket Association has put in place elaborate arrangements to minimise time-loss in the event of rain, including importing pitch covers, for the T20 International between India and South Africa on October 2, a senior official said. The last cricket match at Barsapara Stadium here between India and Sri Lanka in January 2020 was abandoned following heavy rainfall. Guwahati had experienced unprecedented rainfall in the middle of winter, and that is why the match in 2020 had to be eventually called off. The weather forecast for October 2 is clear, but the weather is not within the control of anyone. We have all arrangements in place in case there is rain on October 2, ACA secretary Devajit Saikia told PTI. The ACA has imported two extremely lightweight pitch covers from the US, he said. It already has around 20 covers at its disposal. These imported covers ensure that water or moisture does not seep into the pitch, Saikia said. He said the ground had been handed over to the BCCI chief curator on September 16, and its staff is now in charge of the entire field, including the pitch. (PTI)

India face Vietnam test in football tourney

HO CHI MINH CITY, SEPT 26 /--/ The Indian men's football team will have its task cut out when it takes on Vietnam in the Hung Thinh Friendly Football Tournament here on Tuesday. In their opener last Saturday, India were held to a 1-1 draw by lower-ranked Singapore. Up against a confident Vietnam, who blanked Singapore 4-0 in their first match, the Blue Tigers will have to be extremely focussed. "It will be a very different game against a much stronger opponent, so our approach will also change accordingly," said India head coach Igor Stimac said on the eve of the match. "We need to be more focused, especially on vertical football and quick transition. "At the same time, we must maintain focus on our defence as well. They pose a real threat from long range shots, and from their crosses, and we need to be able to deal with that," said Stimac. The India head coach has also closely followed the match between Vietnam and Singapore, and believes that their Tuesday's opponents are an organised unit. "I've watched their first match against Singapore and they (Vietnam) are a very disciplined side," said Stimac. "They have also had enough time after the first game for recovery, while we need to see how many of our boys will be available and fit to play." (PTI)

Tasnim, Rajawat claim singles crowns in Chhattisgarh International Challenge

RAIPUR, SEPT 26 /--/ Former junior World No. 1 Tasnim Mir and Thomas Cup winner Priyanshu Rajawat clinched the women's and men's singles titles respectively at the India Chhattisgarh International Challenge here. Tasnim got the better of sixth seed Samiya Farooqui 14-21 21-17 21-11 in the women's final, while Rajawat defeated the experienced Subhankar Dey 21-13 21-11 in the men's singles summit clash on Sunday. In mixed doubles, N Sikki Reddy and Rohan Kapoor defeated Thailand's Ratchapol Makkasasithorn and Chasinee Korepap 22-20 23-21 to claim the title. India had a chance to make a clean sweep with even the men's doubles final being an all-Indian affair. Third seeds Ishan Bhatnagar and K Sai Prateek upset second seeds Krishna Prasad and Vishnuvardhan Goud 17-21 21-15 23-21 in the men's doubles final. However, unseeded Indian pair of Aarti Sara Sunil and Pooja Dandu couldn't get past Japan's sixth seeded combination of Chisato Hoshi and Miyu Takahashi in women's doubles, losing 21-12 12-21 7-21 in the final. (PTI)

We warned her multiple times: Deepti on controversial run out

KOLKATA, SEPT 26 /--/ India all-rounder Deepti Sharma on Monday revealed that Charlie Dean was warned against backing up multiple times before she effected a controversial run out of the England batter in the third and final ODI. The dismissal reignited an intense debate over the 'spirit of the game'. "Woh plan tha hum logon ka, kyunki woh baar baar... Hum warn bhi kar chuke the usko. Jo rules mein hain, jo guidelines hain, uske according hi humne kiya (We had planned this as she was not paying heed to our repeated warnings. We acted according to the rules and the guidelines)," Deepti told reporters upon her arrival here. Reduced to 118 for nine in their pursuit of 170 in the third ODI, England's chase was led by their No 9 batter Dean who revived their hopes with her last wicket partnership with Freya Davies. With 17 needed to win, Dean was run out for 47 with the veteran Indian off-spinner deciding to clip the balls during her delivery stride to put an end to their 35-run partnership that gave India 3-0 sweep. It was also Jhulan Goswami's swansong game.

ICC T20I Rankings: India go seven points clear of England at top

DUBAI, SEPT 26 /--/ India went seven points clear of England at the top of the ICC T20 rankings following its narrow series win over Australia in Hyderabad. Down 0-1 against touring the Australia, the Rohit Sharma-led India bounced back in style to level the series in Nagpur before Virat Kohli and Suryakumar Yadav's fifties in the deciding rubber on Sunday sealed a 2-1 win. The six-wicket final over win improved its ranking by one point to 268 points, a seven-point lead over its closest rival in England in the ICC T20 rankings released on Monday. The upcoming three-match series against South Africa will give India a chance to consolidate its lead at the top ahead of the World Cup in Australia. The Proteas occupy third place on the team rankings with 258 points but could stake its claim in the upcoming series commencing at Thiruvananthapuram on

Wednesday. Incidentally, it was Pakistan's narrow three-run win over England in the fourth game in Karachi on Sunday that helped India increase its lead. That series remains tied at two games apiece, with plenty of rankings points still to play for during the final three matches in Lahore.

Pakistan is currently tied with South Africa for third place on the team rankings with 258 points but could rise as high as second by winning the remaining three matches against England. England on the other hand will maintain second place on the rankings should it win one of those contests. Reigning World Cup champion Australia, which is placed sixth, dropped one point to 250 following its series loss to India. Australia is slated to play six matches - against West Indies, England and India (warm-up) - before it gets the chance to defend its trophy at home. (PTI)

Want to give Karthik more game time ahead of WC: India skipper

HYDERABAD, SEPT 26 /--/ India skipper Rohit Sharma wants to give wicketkeeper batter Dinesh Karthik more time in the middle before the team heads Down Under for the T20 World Cup next month. India have been alternating between Karthik and Rishabh Pant in their playing XI. While the young keeper was given the nod ahead of the veteran player in the Asia Cup, Karthik was picked for all three matches against Australia. I wanted both of these guys to have a number of games under their belt before the World Cup. When we went to the Asia Cup both of these guys were in the fray to play all games,"



Rohit said at the post-match press conference after India clinched the three-match series against Australia on Sunday. But I just feel that Dinesh needs a little more game time. He hardly got to bat (this series). Just maybe three balls. So that's not enough time, Rohit added. Karthik faced seven balls in total against Australia, while Pant played only one game where he did not get a chance to bat. Pant also needs game time obviously. But looking at how this series was it was important for me to just stick to that consistent batting lineup. India take on South Africa for a three-match T20I series, starting Wednesday and Rohit said Karthik and Pant's inclusion in the playing xi will depend upon the situation. I don't know what we're gonna do against South Africa. We just need to go and see their bowling, what sort of bowling lineup they'll play with, and who are the best guys for us who can handle that bowling lineup. It all depends on that. We want to be flexible in our batting. So if the situation or if the thing demands that we need a left-hander, we will bring in a left-hander if we need a right-hander, we will continue to do that. But we'll try and manage those guys pretty carefully. I do understand that they need game time before the World Cup but there are only 11 players you can play, unfortunately." (PTI)

Laver Cup: Frances Tiafoe stars as Team World win first ever title



LONDON, SEPT 26 /--/ Frances Tiafoe led Team World to their first Laver Cup title as the American saved four match points in a dramatic victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas that denied Roger Federer a farewell trophy on Sunday. Tiafoe staged a superb fight back to win 1-6, 7-6 (13/11), 10/8 in the penultimate match of the tournament at London's O2 Arena. That was enough to give John McEnroe's Team World a 13-8 overall margin of victory with a match to spare, sealing their maiden triumph in the competition after Team Europe won the first four editions.

While Federer had hoped to mark the end of his career by lifting the trophy in a tournament he helped create, the Swiss legend was left to salute Tiafoe and the rest of the Team World squad.

"Congratulations to Team World, amazing comeback," Federer said. "It's been emotional at times but I had a great time. I can't thank you enough for that. I enjoyed every minute." Promising to attend next year's Laver Cup in Canada, Federer said: "I'm looking forward to next year. I'll be there too, supporting both teams from a different position." Federer had played the last match of his glittering career on Friday when he and Rafael Nadal were beaten by

Tiafoe and Jack Sock in the doubles. The 20-time Grand Slam champion's tearful farewell was the tournament's headline moment, but Federer - unable to play further matches due to the knee problems that forced his retirement - stayed around to cheer on his Team Europe colleagues. Despite the presence of Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic and former world number one Andy Murray on the Team Europe roster, it was fitting that Tiafoe and Canadian rising star Felix Auger-Aliassime powered Team World's comeback from an 8-4 overnight deficit. Tiafoe, 24, and Auger-Aliassime, 22, are part of a generation expected to take the centre-stage now that Federer has retired, and with Nadal and Murray as well in the twilight of their careers. "It's an unbelievable feeling. Our captain Jonny Mac was tired of losing, he was dropping F-bombs all week. I kept saying that this is our year. It wasn't just me, we all showed up," Tiafoe said. "It looks like I have that clutch game right now. I'm happy I get to hold the Laver Cup trophy, that's all that mattered." Needing to win three of Sunday's four matches, Team World were dragged back into contention by Auger-Aliassime. Auger-Aliassime handed Djokovic his first defeat since May as the Canadian powered to a 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) victory. Djokovic, who missed the recent US Open due to his

unvaccinated status, had won his first match for two months on Saturday when the 21-time Grand Slam champion defeated Tiafoe in straight sets. "It's one of the best performances of my career. I've been close a few times against these great champions, so it feels to great to get a win like this," Auger-Aliassime said. Auger-Aliassime's first ever win over Djokovic was especially impressive as he had already partnered Sock to a 2-6, 6-3, 10/8 doubles victory over Matteo Berrettini and Murray earlier on Sunday. Auger-Aliassime's heroics set the stage for Tiafoe who didn't disappoint. Tsitsipas blazed through the first set in just 21 minutes, but the Greek's fast start was halted by the defiant Tiafoe. Tsitsipas squandered four match points in the second set tie-break as Tiafoe showed why he reached this year's US Open semi-finals, staving off defeat in nerveless fashion. On his third set point, Tiafoe delivered a perfectly placed volley to trigger a first to 10 points 'Laver Breaker'. Tiafoe tipped the match in his favour with an astonishing cross-court winner after sprinting to the net to reach the disbelieving Tsitsipas's drop-shot. It was a moment of magic that recalled Federer at his finest and the Swiss great couldn't resist a wry grin as he soaked up his last taste of big-time tennis before riding into the sunset. (AFP)

Everyone thought Jadeja's absence would weaken India but Axar was outstanding: McDonald

HYDERABAD, SEPT 26 /--/ Ravindra Jadeja's absence from the T20 series was expected to weaken India but the hosts found an able replacement in "outstanding" Axar Patel, said Australia coach Andrew McDonald. Left-arm spinner Axar, who was shoed in as a like-for-like replacement for the injured Jadeja, impressed everyone with his bowling, ending as the leading wicket-taker in the three-match series. Axar, in particular, had an outstanding series. With Jaddu out everyone thought that it might become a bit of a weakness for India, but they've found another one again, which tends to happen, McDonald said at the post-match press conference after India clinched the series. The

Australian bowling attack, comprising the pace duo of Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood, was taken to the cleaners by the Indian batters. Asked if it's a concern heading to the World Cup, McDonald said: Across the series the run rate was high, it was entertaining cricket from the get-go. Bat dominated the ball, so there was really no place to hide for bowling units, in particular death. We worked our way through some plans. We saw some good results with some of the plans that we implemented that might be able to transition to the World Cup. McDonald added that Australia will have reinforcements in the form of Mitchell Starc when they begin the defense of their

World Cup title at home next month. The connection between here (India) and Australia might be slightly different, a little bit more bounce, different tactics. Mitchell Starc comes back into the picture being one of our best death bowlers. So, we feel like we'll get reinforcements there. McDonald feels most of the bowling attack is under the pump due to the skills of the batters. The conversations always going to be can you get better at your death bowling? The answer to that is yes. We encourage our guys to make good decisions and execute them. Sometimes the batter out-executes you and we've seen that with Hardik (Pandya) across the series. Suryakumar Yadav was

outstanding today and he's gonna be dangerous in the World Cup but he showed what he can do. Australia were without a few of their World Cup-bound players due to injuries but the head coach feels the defending champions have enough depth to overcome the situation. "It's fortuitous that some of the guys got the opportunity here. We got a couple of injuries which are concerning leading into a World Cup. You don't like to see some of your mainstay players out of the team leading in but we feel as though we've got some good options in depth. In the absence of David Warner, who was rested, Cameron Green embraced the challenge of opening". (PTI)

