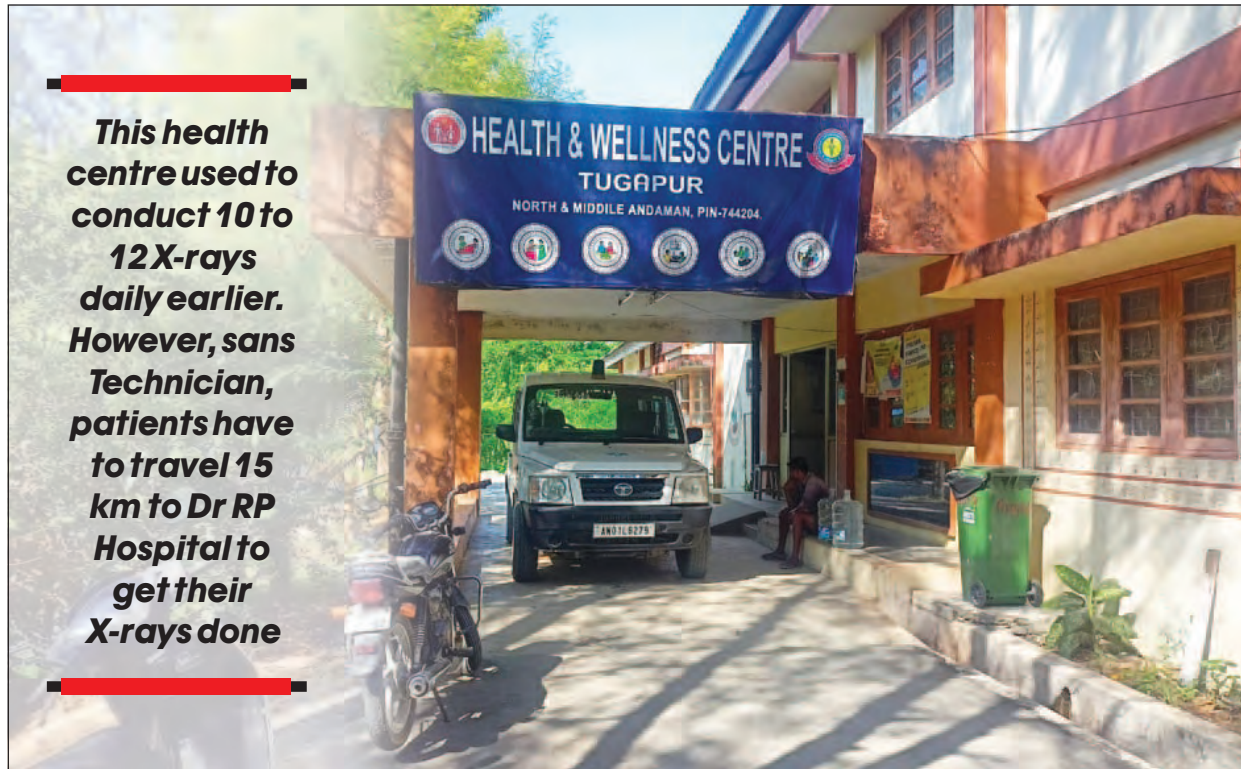


## Patients without ray of hope at PHC Tugapur

KURMA RAO

MAYABUNDER, SEPT 23/--/ At the Primary Health Centre, Tugapur hundreds of patients reach the hospital every day for treatment. For the past three years, the X-ray machine has been lying idle in the hospital sans a Technician. The X-Ray Technician of this hospital has been transferred and posted at PHC ShaheedDweep in the year 2019 and since no replacement has been made available to PHC Tugapur despite repeated requests from the hospital management. This has been causing severe hardship to patients of not only Tugapur village, but adjoining villagers like Chainpur, Pahalgaoan, Webi and Basantipur as they have to face great inconvenience seeking treatment at this hospital. According to sources, PHC Tugapur used to do 10 to 12 X-rays daily. However, due to non-posting of a Technician for the last three years, patients are not getting X-rays done in this hospital. They have no



**This health centre used to conduct 10 to 12 X-rays daily earlier. However, sans Technician, patients have to travel 15 km to Dr RP Hospital to get their X-rays done**

alternative but to travel 15 kms to Dr. RP Hospital, Mayabunder to get their X-Ray done. People are facing a lot of trouble due to this. After the transfer of a

permanent X-Ray Technician from PHC Tugapur to PHC ShaheedDweep, the Directorate of Health Services failed to provide a replacement leaving the

patients to face hardship.

Meanwhile the issue of posting of a X-Ray Technician in PHC Tugapur was raised by Mr. Joshy P. John, Samity Member,

Pahalgaoan before the Chief Secretary during his visit to this region recently.

## WATER WOES

### South Point residents rue supply of water at odd hours



ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, SEPT 23/--/ A major leakage on the water tank at Shadipur has led to disruption of normal water supply to residents of Ward No-10 and Ward No-11 at South Point for the past 20 days. The Municipal authorities have been able to restore water supply in a limited manner, but failed to follow the water supply schedule attracting sharp criticism from the residents. Mr. Ganesh Ram, Junior Engineer, Water Section, Shadipur told EOI that there is a leakage in the water tank at Shadipur. Presently only half the capacity of the tank is filled with water which is supplied to the residents of Ward No-10 and Ward No-11. The Council has made requisition for supply of materials required to undertake the repair work and once the materials are received, the repair works will be carried out which will take 5-6 days,

he added. Meanwhile, the change of water supply timing from 7.00 am in the morning to 11.00 am has not gone well with the residents as people complain that most of them are office goers. Due to change in water supply timing, they have to face problems in collecting and storing water. Some of them even have to avail half-day leave from the office to collect and store water supplied at odd hours like 11.00 am. Residents have demanded the Council to supply water either in the morning or in the evening hours till the repair work is completed and normal water supply is restored. "Supply of water at odd hours is not suitable for the residents as most of them are office goers. In order to collect and store water we have to avail leave from the office so that we can get the water. If we miss the specific timing we will have to suffer due to limited supply of water", said a resident of South Point.

## Veterinary Sub-Dispensary building inaugurated



SURBRATA

MAYABUNDER, SEPT 23/--/ A Veterinary Sub-Dispensary building was inaugurated at Pinakinagar on Friday. Mr. Monajit Halder, Pradhan, GP Harinagar inaugurated the building as the chief guest. Mr. Shankar Mandal, Zilla Parishad Member and Mr. Dilip Kumar Das, Panchayat Samity Member of Harinagar Panchayat was the guest of honour in presence of PRIs and villagers of Kamalapur and Pinakinagar villages. Dr. K. A. Naveen, SVO, N&M Andaman, Dr. Ashim Roy, GPF, Basantipur, Dr. Sunita Roy, SVO, Billyground, & staff of Veterinary department were present in the function.



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## DISHA meets under MP's chairmanship

PORT BLAIR, SEPT 23/--/ The District Level Development, Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) meeting of South Andaman District was held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma, Member of Parliament in the presence of Smti. Pramila Kumari, Adhyaksha Zilla Parishad South Andaman, Smti. U Kavita, Chairperson PBMC and Mr. Suneel Anchipaka, Deputy Commissioner of South Andaman (Member Secretary DISHA Committee).

The officials from all the departments under A&N Administration participated in the meeting and presented the status of implementation of various



Centrally Sponsored Schemes and UT Schemes being implemented by their department.

Detailed discussion was done about the implementation of various schemes in the South

Andaman District. The Adhyaksha Zilla Parishad South Andaman requested the Education and Social Welfare departments to give preference to the Self Help Groups for supply of mid-day meals to schools and

dry ration to anganwadi centers. The Member of Parliament enquired about the assistance being provided to the local people through implementation of PMAY (U). The issues of all departments were also discussed in detail.

The Member of Parliament requested all the departments to put in their best for effective implementation of the schemes so that the benefits of all schemes may reach out to the last mile beneficiaries and subsequently lead to development of the Islands.

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# SC to hear on Oct 10 BJP MP Manoj Tiwari's plea on firecrackers ban

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 23/--/** The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear on October 10 a plea filed by BJP MP Manoj Tiwari against the Delhi government's decision banning the storage, sale, and use of all types of firecrackers till January 1, 2023, to check pollution levels in the national capital.

Contending that freedom of religion cannot be taken away under the pretext of the right to life, Tiwari has also sought directions to all states not to take any coercive action like lodging FIR against common people found selling or

using permissible firecrackers during the upcoming festival season like Deepawali.

The plea was mentioned for urgent listing before a bench headed by Chief Justice Uday Umesh Lalit, which said it would be taken up on October 10.

The top court had last year clarified there is no blanket ban on the use of firecrackers and only those fireworks which contain barium salts are prohibited.

Warning that top officials at various levels "shall be held personally liable" for any lapses, the apex court had said it is unfortunate that despite its

directions blatant violations were taking place.

The BJP MP, in his plea filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, has said that several state governments and certain high courts had in 2021 passed orders contrary to the stand taken by the apex court and imposed a blanket ban on firecrackers.

"With so many different orders, directions and views, it was confusing for the people at large to understand whether the firecrackers were allowed or not despite this court's refusal to put a blanket ban," said the plea, drawn by advocate Shashank Shekhar

Jha.

"In the name of Right to life, freedom of religion cannot be taken away and that a balance has to strike like that has been done through the decision of this court dated October 29, 2021," it said.

The petition alleged that despite clear orders of the top court, certain states and Union Territories did not take necessary steps to ensure proper arrangements for the celebration of Deepawali were made and instead registered FIRs and imposed a curfew.

"The chief secretaries, police commissioners,

police district superintendents, station house officers, and others in order to comply with the orders of their respective state governments have taken action against the common people who while purchasing the firecrackers did not even have knowledge about the ingredients of the crackers at all," it said.

"That such arrests and FIRs on the festive season like Deepawali has not only brought a very bad message to the society at large and has unnecessarily created a fear and anger among the masses," the plea said. (PTI)

## Govt, assembly united against corruption: CM Dhama after Speaker cancels ad hoc appointments

**DEHRADUN, SEPT 23/--/** The Uttarakhand government and the state assembly are united in the fight against corruption, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama said Friday, welcoming Speaker Ritu Khanduri's decision to revoke 228 ad hoc appointments in the assembly made in violation of norms.

Khanduri Friday revoked the 228 ad hoc appointments in the state assembly -- 150 were made till 2016, six in 2020 and 72 in 2021 -- on the recommendation of an expert committee.

Constituted by her on September 3, the expert



Pushkar Singh Dhama

panel headed by retired IAS officer DK Kotia completed the probe within 20 days, 10 days ahead of the one-month deadline, and submitted its final report to the speaker late on Thursday night.

The panel was set up on the recommendation of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama following charges of favouritism in the appointments on the discretion of successive Speakers.

"The state government is working with a sense of commitment towards good governance. We will not tolerate corruption of any kind. The state government and the state assembly are one in the campaign against corruption," Dhama said.

Talking further about his government's action against corrupt activities, he said that after irregularities surfaced in the recruitment examinations held by the Uttarakhand Subordinate Services Selection Commission, the responsibility of conducting other papers was transferred to the Uttarakhand Public Service Commission.

The examination process has been started afresh, he said.

He said stern action has been taken against the culprits in the paper leak case with a total of 41 persons arrested so far and chargesheets filed against 18. Three persons have been arrested in connection with irregularities in recruitment to the post of forest guards and one in connection with the appointment of security guards at the secretariat, Dhama said.

Youths will not be subjected to any injustice, the Chief Minister said and asked them to start preparing for the competitive examinations with full dedication and enthusiasm. (PTI)



Leader of Opposition Akhilesh Yadav with party MLAs walking out of the Uttar Pradesh assembly session, in Lucknow on Friday

## AAP expels Mankotia alleging anti-party activities

**JAMMU, SEPT 23/--/**The Aam Admi Party on Saturday terminated former legislator Balwant Singh Mankotia from the party for anti-party activities, AAP election in-charge said on Friday.

Mankotia, who was president of the Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party (JKNPP) before joining AAP in April, has hit out at AAP for deceiving people and said he is yet to decide the next course of his future.

"Party has taken serious note of these issues (anti-party activities) and after investigation, you have

been found guilty. Therefore your basic membership with AAP standards terminated from September 23", AAP election in-charge Harjot Singh Bains said in a letter to Mankotia.

AAP charged him with engaging with other national and regional parties of J&K and failure to engage or participate in any of its political activities besides not performing any task given by the party in the last three months.

As per the letter, Mankotia has also been charged with serious allegations of influencing

AAP volunteers to join other parties and offering them positions in other parties and defaming the party on media platforms.

Reacting to the development, he told reporters, "I am not a primary member of the party. I am on their party. What right do they have to expel me?"

The former MLA said, he had gone there for some days as he felt that the party will do something good for the union territory but within a fortnight he felt that it caused more damage than good to J&K and was not active at all.

He said he has not done any anti-party activity in any way and all the allegations against him are bitter lies.

In the past, he served as the president of the Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party and represented Udhampur in the Legislative Assembly from 2002 to 2014.

Mankotia joined AAP along with ex-MLA Yash Paul Kundal and over 100 other J&K leaders in the presence of Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia and Environment Minister Gopal Rai on April 8. (PTI)

## Taking minor's confession of crime unconstitutional: HC

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 23/--/** Seeking a confession about an alleged crime committed by a juvenile is unconstitutional as a "presumption is raised at the pre-trial stage itself that the child has committed the offence, the Delhi High Court has said.

Further, it said securing the confession of the juvenile in conflict with the law is beyond the scope of a report of the preliminary assessment to be prepared under the Juvenile Justice Act.

A bench of Justices Mukta Gupta and Anish Dayal, which perused a preliminary assessment report prepared by a psychologist on the subject, said that under clause 3 of the report it can be clearly noted that a confession is

sought to be extracted from a child as to how the offence was committed and the reasons thereof.

This manner of seeking a confession from the child is unconstitutional and beyond the scope of a report of the preliminary assessment to be prepared under Section 15 of the JJ Act, the bench said in its September 19 order.

Section 15 of the JJ Act provides that in case a child, between 16 to 18 years of age, has committed a heinous offence, the Juvenile Justice Board may conduct a preliminary assessment to assess the maturity level of the child, his mental and his physical capacity to conduct such an act.

The bench also noted

that under the Act, the probation officer is required to fill out a form that relates to the preparation of the Social Investigation Report (SIR) for children in conflict with the law.

It said the two questions regarding the alleged role of the child and reason for committing the offence were incorrect as a presumption is raised at the pre-trial stage itself that the child has committed the offence.

Most often, this SIR filled by the probation officer is also considered pertinent at the time of preparing the preliminary assessment report under Section 15 of the Act, it said.

The high court was hearing a criminal reference relating to the

issuance of guidelines to be followed by Juvenile Justice Boards (JJB) in conducting preliminary assessments before sending a minor for trial as an adult.

It had earlier allowed a plea by NGO HAQ Centre for Child Rights to intervene in the matter.

Initially, all children below the age of 18 years were to be treated as a juvenile and tried by the JJB.

However, after an amendment was brought in the 2015 JJ Act, a separate category for juveniles between the age of 16 to 18 years involved in heinous crimes, was formed.

A preliminary enquiry needs to be carried out to ascertain if they are to be tried as a child or as an adult. (PTI)

## Major delay in 7 new hospital work of Delhi govt, most only half-finished: Official data

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 23/--/** The construction of most of the seven ICU hospitals with capacity of 6,800 beds that were planned to accommodate COVID patients during the third wave of the infection, has reached around only halfway mark so far, official data showed.

Work on the 458-bed hospital in Kirari, which was originally scheduled to be complete by February 2023, had not started till September 17 this year, showed the data shared by the Delhi government in a COVID review meeting of Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Thursday. A 610-bed facility at Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya in Geeta Colony and 525-bed one in Sultanpuri were only 50 per cent and 45 per cent complete. Both hospitals are now scheduled to be ready by November 2022.

The Sarita Vihar hospital with 336-bed capacity is expected to be complete by October this year, with only 60 per cent work done till September 17, as per the data.

The 1,912-bed facility at GTB Hospital and another 1,430-bed one in Shalimar Bagh were completed by 45 per cent and 50 per cent till September 17.

Both are scheduled to be ready by end of this year.

Only 30 per cent work was done in the 1,577-bed hospital which is coming up in Raghunagar. It is now scheduled to be completed by December.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia after a review meeting with the PWD and health department officials on Monday had said the work was apace on a "mission mode" on these projects, as he issued instructions for a timely completion of these hospitals. Sisodia was informed by the officials in the meeting that construction work of most of the hospitals will be completed by the end of this year, whereas others will be completed by the mid-2023.

Officials in the DDMA meeting had said that the number of beds in these seven hospitals may vary due to the changed COVID scenario and beginning of outdoor patient and other general services.

In June, Lt Governor V K Saxena had given a nod to

Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) to probe the allegations of irregularities in awarding of tenders for the construction of these hospitals by the Public Works Department (PWD) of the Delhi government.

Construction of four other hospitals by the city government was also found delayed with about 50 per cent, the data showed.

Only 48 per cent work was completed on the Siraspur hospital with 1,164 beds, which was scheduled to be complete by end of September next year.

The remaining three hospitals in Jwalapuri, Madipur, and Hastals will have 691 beds each, it revealed. The work on Jwalapuri and Madipur hospitals, which were scheduled to be ready by June 2023, was complete by only 65 per cent and 57 per cent. The Hastals hospital was just 12 per cent ready and was scheduled to be complete by December 2023.

These 11 hospitals will prove to be helpful in fighting situations like the COVID pandemic and emergency cases efficiently, Sisodia had earlier said. (PTI)

## Sonia, Priyanka Gandhi to participate in 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' in Karnataka

**BENGALURU, SEPT 23/--/** Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra would participate in the Karnataka leg of the "Bharat Jodo Yatra" led by Rahul Gandhi that will be entering the state on September 30, state party chief D K Shivakumar said on Friday.

Noting that the Karnataka Congress has made preparations for the yatra by giving responsibility to leaders, Shivakumar said Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi will be participating in the yatra here; they will be giving dates. "...I will announce the dates in the future."

AICC General Secretary K C Venugopal along with another AICC General Secretary and in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala, state Congress President Shivakumar and a host of leaders on Friday participated in the party's review meeting on the yatra.

"In Karnataka, Congress President Sonia Gandhi may attend the Bharat Jodo Yatra some day, and Priyanka Gandhi will also be joining

separately," Venugopal said.

Noting that the Karnataka leg of the yatra will begin at Gundlupet on September 30 at 9 AM, Shivakumar said on October 2, Gandhi Jayanti, there is a programme at Badanavali in Nanjangud Taluk, which is known for its Khadi and Gramodyog Centre.

"There will be two days holiday for Dasara, there will be a public meeting in Ballari, in between Rahul Gandhi will be interacting with youth, women, civil society, students, tribal community and farmers among others each day, and teams have been formed for this," he added.

Not wanting to comment on the demand for Rahul Gandhi as AICC President, Shivakumar in response to a question said, "KPCC has already authorised the Congress President... we all are committed that Rahul ji should lead the party, but it is left to him."

The AICC was fully satisfied with the arrangements made by KPCC for the yatra, Venugopal said, adding the march has been

successful so far and the response to it in Tamil Nadu and Kerala is "unimaginable and beyond expectations".

Arrangements have been made in Karnataka to ensure the same success, he said, "for the last ten years, the BJP and Sangh Parivar had one duty - to tarnish the image of Rahul Gandhi, but people are now realising as to who is Rahul Gandhi... this yatra will be a turning point in Indian politics."

Responding to a question, Venugopal said, "PayCM" is not a campaign created by the Congress party. The party is only taking up genuine issues raised by people of Karnataka, everyone is saying this is the most corrupt government in the state."

The Congress is not scared of arrests, party workers have enough courage and will raise the corruption issue again and again, come what may, he said. Surjewala said Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai "lord over" the most corrupt government in the entire country. "This is a one scam a day government that he (Bommai) heads." (PTI)

## ED detects Rs 35 crore worth of illegal mining in Himachal's Una, conducts raids

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 23/--/** Illegal mining worth Rs 35 crore has been carried out by certain stone crushers and related entities in Una district of Himachal Pradesh, the Enforcement Directorate said Friday.

According to an agency statement, it recently conducted raids against some accused allegedly involved in the illegal activity and seized "incriminating" documents and Rs 15.37 lakh "unaccounted" cash.

The searches were carried out at the premises of Lakhwinder Singh Stone Crushers, Manav Khanna, Neeraj Prabhakar, Vishal alias Vicky and others in Una, Mohali (Punjab) and Panchkula (Haryana) in connection with illegal mining in the Swan river

bed, the agency said.

"Rampant illegal mining was being carried out at various locations in Una and this included illegal mining of sand from the river bed as well as stone mining from quarries."

"The modus operandi adopted by the persons includes excavation of sand and gravel beyond leased mining area, overshooting prescribed depth of mining, thus causing excess mining," the ED said.

The excess illegally mined sand, gravel and stone/boulder were being transported "suspiciously" without payment of requisite royalty/taxes to the state government, it said.

The agency alleged "massive environment damage" was caused due to

non-adherence of environmental norms.

The ED said a joint survey of these mines is being carried out to physically ascertain the extent of damage caused and the quantum of illegal mining.

The money laundering case stems from an FIR filed by the Una police last year.

"Analysis of certain documents recovered from the searched locations revealed parallel sets of documents being maintained having details of actual mining for a short period of time."

"Preliminary analysis of the documents shows that about Rs 35 crore worth illegal mining has been done by the persons involved," the agency said. (PTI)

## Jammu residents celebrate birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh

**JAMMU, SEPT 23/--/** Dressed to the nines, residents of Jammu on Friday took out parades across the city to celebrate the birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh, the last Dogra ruler of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Lieutenant Governor administration had recently declared the birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh, which falls on September 23, as an annual holiday in the Union Territory.

The celebrations

started with the great grandsons of Maharaja Hari Singh offering prayers at the Ranbeshwar temple in the city early morning.

"I want to congratulate the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the 127th birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh ji. Grant of holiday on his birth anniversary is a victory of all the people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the youth of Jammu," grandson of Maharaja Hari Singh and former legislator Vikramaditya told

reporters.

The celebrations by the Yuva Rajput Sabha (YRS) that began on Thursday night continued on Friday while people from all walks of life assembled at Tawi Bridge and Maharaja Hari Singh Park to pay tributes.

Adorning colourful turbans and holding flags of their organisation, several members of the Rajput community on two-wheelers, tractors, cars and even horses took out victory processions in the Ban Talab area of the city.

They raised slogans glorifying Maharaja Hari Singh and brandished swords as part of the celebrations.

"Our continuous agitation yielded results and the government has announced a holiday on the birth anniversary of the Maharaja after 75 years," YRS leader Arjun Singh said.

The Kashmir-based political parties, which have largely ruled the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, were opposed

to the public holiday on the birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh, who signed the instrument of accession with the republic of India on October 26, 1947, he said.

At the Tawi bridge, the BJP leadership led by its president, Ravinder Raina danced to tunes of drum beats amid slogans of 'Maharaja Hari Singh amar rahe'. Sweets were also distributed among the people while medical camps were organised at several places in the city.

"It is victory of people. It is justice done. We congratulate the people of J&K, particularly Yuva Rajputs for their fight," Raina yold reporters.

Congress party led by its working president Raman Bhalla also took part in the celebrations and asserted that it was time for the central government to fulfil another demand of restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood.

Former minister and MP Choudhary Lal Singh also took out victory rally and

said it was time to fight for restoring Jammu and Kashmir's statehood.

A group of displaced Kashmiri Pandits took out a rally in Muthi area and raised pro-Maharaja slogans.

Similar celebrations were also held in Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Reasi, Doda, Kishtwar and Rajouri districts.

In Kathua, some public transporters offered free travel to passengers as a tribute to the Maharaja. (PTI)



# Outdoor picnic for Specially Abled children

PORT BLAIR, SEPT 23/--/ The District Child Protection Unit, South Andaman organised an outdoor picnic for Specially Abled children of Divyang Home, Ferrargunj on Friday at Colinpur.

During the outing, children were most excited as they laughed and had a great time with the same enthusiasm throughout the picnic and enjoyed the ambience of nature by playing together, dancing, singing etc. The Event provided an ample opportunity to the children to take a break from their routine schedules and have a leisure time that would help them to enhance their physical and mental steadiness.

The District Administration, South Andaman is regularly organizing such events to ensure the holistic development of children and also ensuring that the right to Development of all children is preserved.



## ICAR-CIARI licensed "Protocol for Dweep-GauMaa Humpsore Rakshak"



PORT BLAIR, SEPT 23/--/ ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Port Blair signed a Memorandum of Understanding on September 22nd 2022, for licensing a protocol for Dweep-Gau Maa

Humpsore Rakshak (treatment protocol for control of humpsore in cattle). Dr. E.B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI transferred the technology to Mr. Sainath Shenoy, C/o Mahalasa Agro

Products, South Andaman. In line with the upcoming strategies for humpsore treatment in livestock, the teams of ICAR-CIARI scientists; Dr.P.Perumal and Dr.A.K.De have developed the protocol to

treat Humpsore in cattle and buffaloes. It is proven to treat the humpsore within 30 days of application with success rate of 95.37%. In addition, the milk production of cured animals also improved upto 85.07%.

## Multi-speciality health camp to mark Seva Pakhwada by State BJP

PORT BLAIR, SEPT 23/--/ The State BJP led by its President, Mr. Ajoy Bairagi is celebrating various programmes to commemorate the 72nd birthday of Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi from 17th September as Seva Pakhwada.

During this Seva Pakhwada, a multi-speciality health camp is being organised by the party with the Directorate of Health Services at various places from today. Accordingly, a health camp was organised at HWC, Rangachang on Friday. Similar health camp will be organised at District Hospital, Garacharma and Panchayat Kendra, Shaheed Dweep on Saturday.

Mr. Bairagi has requested the general public to avail benefits of the health camps. The entire programme of health camp is coordinated by Mr. Sanna Rao, State Vice President and State In-charge of the health camp programme.

## Kerala HC raps Bharat Jodo Yatra organisers for its flex boards, banners along national highways

KOCHI, SEPT 23 /--/ The Kerala High Court has strongly criticised the Congress-led Bharat Jodo Yatra for the flex boards and banners erected along the side of the roads and said the government departments, including police, have chosen to turn a blind eye towards it. Justice Devan Ramachandran, in an order issued on Thursday evening, said it was a tragedy that the orders of the court and the competent authorities are "given absolutely no respect" by persons and entities "who are in charge of the future of this nation". The court made the observations during an urgent hearing requested by amicus curiae Harish Vasudevan, who filed a report along with photographs, to show that a particular political party, while conducting procession across Kerala, has erected a large number of boards, banners, flags and other such material illegally.

"Illegal installations have been made by a particular political party on every side of National Highway from Trivandrum to Thrissur and even beyond; and that even though the police authorities and other statutory authorities are fully aware of this, they have chosen to turn a blind eye to it," the court noted its order without naming Congress party or the Bharat Jodo Yatra. The court directed the Local Self Government Department's principal secretary and state police chief to respond by Friday afternoon on how the "illegal installations have been put up and why they have not been removed".

"When the above official respondents respond, they shall also advert specifically to the earlier directions of this Court, that every board which has been put up by an advertising agency/printer without its name or address embedded on it is illegal and that necessary action against them should also be taken," the court said. The court wondered why it was necessary for it to keep on reminding the officers that apart from the specific orders of this Court, the state government has issued circulars, as also the road safety authority having issued specific notifications prohibiting such actions.

"These illegal installations cause great danger to motorists since their attention would be distracted, while moving through the highway; and there is also the real danger of some of these installations coming loose and creating havoc, particularly with respect to two wheelers, as we have seen in other parts of the country earlier...", the court said. Justice Ramachandran said there is also a problem of such installations being disposed of and the waste generated by it becoming incapable of being handled by the Local Self Government institutions or by any other competent authority. (PTI)

## Vishal expresses gratitude for ex-gratia relief

PORT BLAIR, SEPT 23/--/ Mr. Vishal Jolly, BJP's National Executive Committee Member has thanked & expressed his gratitude to the Lt. Governor, A & N Islands, Chief Secretary, A & N Administration, Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman, as well as all other officials involved in the process for considering the request to grant adequate compensation to the father of two deceased children of the same family, who recently lost their lives in the same incident of drowning at Hope Town, South Andaman.



## PRI team from GP Mithakhari discusses water issues with EE, APWD



PORT BLAIR, SEPT 23/--/ A team led by Mr. MohdSafique, Pradhan Gram Panchayat Mithakhari, consisting of Mr. T. Mohd Rafique, PanchayatSamiti Member of Mithakhari and Mr. PA Sharfuddin, ZillaParishad Member, Mithakhari met the Executive Engineer, RCD, APWD on Thursday and discussed about water projects to mitigating the water problems faced by the people of the area.




The team reminded the commitment of the EE, APWD for supply of water on alternate days in the Ograbraj and Muslimbasti villages. They expressed disappointment that the residents of the

areas have not been getting water on alternate days. After hearing their issues, the EE assured to supply water to these villagers on alternative days from next month onwards.

The PRI members' team also demanded for extending the water catchment area in SonaPahad Dam and to start the OgrabrajBadaNallah project at the earliest. The EE informed that he will soon visit the SonaPahad area. As regard to starting the OgrabrajBadaNallah project, he informed that the project which is under administrative approval will start immediately after the grant of approval.

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Hegel was right when he said that we learn from history that man can never learn anything from history

George Bernard Shaw

## Rice becomes costly

Domestic prices of rice are showing “increasing trend” and it may “continue to increase” due to the lower production forecast and the higher non-basmati export. This is not the comment of any opposition party, but a Food Ministry’s statement that came on a day when the all-India daily average retail and wholesale prices of rice, wheat, wheat flour recorded 9-20 per cent rise than the prices a year ago. Data available on the Department of Consumer Affairs portal show that the all-India daily average retail prices of rice were higher by 9.03 per cent, wheat by 14.39 per cent and wheat flour by 17.87 per cent as compared to their prices a year ago. The Agriculture Ministry has pegged kharif rice output at 104.99 million tonnes – lower than 111.76 mt in the last kharif season. The all-India daily average wholesale prices of rice were higher by 10.16 per cent, wheat by 15.43 per cent and wheat flour by 20.65 per cent as compared to their prices a year ago. The Agriculture Ministry has released the First Advance Estimates of production of major kharif crops for 2022-23 that pegged kharif rice production at 104.99 million tonnes during the current season in wake of uneven monsoon, which is 6.77 mt – or 6 per cent – lower than the production in the last season. The kharif rice production estimates are lower than the target of 112 mt set for the current season and production of 105.21 mt for 2020-21. The dip in kharif rice production is significant in view of the requirement of rice for distribution under the National Food Security Act 2013. The likely shortfall in area and production of paddy for the kharif season 2022 is 6%, the Food Ministry said on the domestic rice production scenario. In domestic production, 60-70 LMT estimated production loss was earlier anticipated. Now, production loss of 40-50 LMT is expected and production output is not expected to be higher this year but only on par with previous year.

The recent changes in India’s rice-export rules have helped keep a check on domestic prices without reducing the availability for exports. The changes have been done keeping in mind the need to support the ethanol-blending programme that saves costly oil imports and to help the animal husbandry and poultry sectors by reducing the cost of animal feed that has a bearing on the price of milk, meat and eggs. The amendment in rice export rules was carried out in view of rise in global demand for broken rice due to geo-political scenario which has impacted price movement of commodities including those related to animal feed.

The government banned the export of broken rice on September 9 as export of broken rice increased by more than 43 times in past 4 years (21.31 LMT exported from April-August, 2022, compared to 0.51 LMT in the same period in 2019) with significant jump in 2021-22 over last year. In 2021, the quantity exported was 15.8 LMT (April-August, 2021). Prices of broken rice rose significantly in the current year. Domestic price of broken rice, which was Rs 16/kg in the open market, has increased to about Rs 22/kg in states. Poultry sector and animal husbandry farmers were impacted the most due to price hike of feed ingredients as about 60-65% inputs cost for poultry feed comes from broken rice. Any increase in prices of feedstock are reflected in price of poultry products like milk, egg, meat, etc., adding to food inflation.

# Attacking Opposition during Yatra, Cong has harmed the cause of unity

## REFLEX ACTION

Nitya Chakraborty

Congress could damage the efforts of building allout unity against the BJP at this crucial moment. First, the CPI(M), Ramesh said that the CPI(M)and the BJP are the two sides of the same coin in Kerala. This is preposterous. The Congress has every right to fight the CPI(M) in Kerala as they are traditional rivals. But in the course of a Yatra whose aim is to unite the secular forces against BJP, making such insane remarks is unpardonable from opposition perspective.

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) in Kerala has been fighting the RSS and the BJP for long in. The Congress is also certainly fighting the BJP in its own way. The electoral compulsion of gaining most seats from Kerala in coming Lok Sabha polls should not lead to such biased remark from a seasoned political leader like Ramesh. In 2021 assembly elections, the Congress did not get any single seat and this was followed by its abysmal performance in the byelections and civic polls. The Congress has now two percent of the voting share in Bengal. In the coming Lok Sabha polls, the Congress may very well lose its present two seats. Who is responsible for this Congress decline? It is the Congress Party in the state itself along with the party high command. The Congress had no guts to fight the BJP. Only Trinamool had that organisational power to take on BJP in Bengal and it showed that in 2021 assembly elections as also later. If the Congress supporters at block level deserted the party and joined Trinamool, the reason is the organisational collapse and not ‘ Trinamool’s intent to weaken the party".

Let us take about AAP now. AAP that way is not like the other trusted anti-BJP parties-Left and the TMC. AAP, after winning Delhi has trounced the Congress in Punjab and taken over the state as a ruling party. AAP has every right to expand its base and if it is at the expense of the Congress, it is quite ethical. Now the Congress is afraid that AAP will cut into Congress votes in Gujarat. But the ground reports say that AAP will cut both Congress and BJP votes in the state. Congress should put its organisation in proper shape in Gujarat rather than blaming AAP for weakening the Congress.

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal is saying in Gujarat campaign that “you may elect a Congressman as legislator but you will soon find him in BJP.” Within few hours of his remark, 8 out of 11 Congress MLAs left the party and joined the BJP. Who is responsible for this decline of the Congress strength? Certainly not AAP. In last Goa assembly polls, two AAP MLAs were elected. They are still with the party. These AAP legislators were also under pressure by the BJP, but they did not defect, the eight Congress MLAs did. Congress leaders should do some real introspection about the party’s organisational shape and should not be in a hurry to blame others.

Bharat Jodo Yatra has another 140 days to continue. The Congress cavalcade will travel through ten more states. People including from the opposition are wishing success to the Yatra so that the message of keeping the Constitutional ethos of the country intact reaches wider sections of the countryside to arouse them against the divisive forces represented by the BJP and the Narendra Modi Government. Congress leadership has to ensure no such comments divisive to the opposition unity are aired again during the Yatra. The Congress can be an integral part of the anti-BJP opposition front when it respects the others. This should be crystal clear to the party spokespersons during this long haul. (IPA)



Durga Puja being just a few days in the coming, a youngster poses with a bunch of Saccharum Spontaneum (Kashful)—Arijit Ganguly

# Digitisation could make India a global health and wellness hub

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to making India a global manufacturing hub and his stress on the need to work on easy transit to promote trade in central Asia and Europe at the recently concluded Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is well justified. Stepping up manufacturing has huge potential for providing employment particularly at the semi-skilled level. But widespread digitization has opened up a huge opportunity for India to become a major global hub for providing healthcare for millions of people in not only rural India but in the entire world.

India has over the years have developed huge pool of qualified doctors and para-medics. With quality medical education, Indian doctors and para-medics are sought after everywhere. Every major hospital in developed nations have sufficient number of Indian doctors. Besides large private hospitals providing top class medical treatment with five-star facility have come up in big numbers particularly in South India. The treatment provided there is comparable to the best in the world and are not cost prohibitive as compared to some of the advanced economies. By Indian standards some of those private hospitals are quite expensive.

Healthcare is a very expensive affair in developed world and increasingly medical tourism has caught on in India and patients

from neighbouring countries and gulf region get medical treatment done in India because of highly developed and well equipped hospitals in the country. Lately patients from US and Canada do frequent India for medical treatment particularly in private hospitals in South India as it works out cheaper even after including the cost of travel and stay in India along with an attendant during recuperation.

With 5G being rolled out soon in several parts of the country and digitization spreading in various walks of life including medicare, remote surgery has become a doable phenomenon. India could become a health care hub for the world. A surgeon sitting in Chennai can conduct surgery in a small town with the help of a trained nurse in that small town. The same surgeon can conduct a surgery in US or Canada as well. This can be a routine affair with the help of 5G network. Once fully established 5G network can transmit both real time granular view of the surgery in progress and the surgeon’s instructions that guide the robotic arms carrying out the operation. For this the nurse would need to

be trained to assist in remote surgery. There may be some regulatory issues which can be evolved.

This development is at a nascent stage and regulatory issues have to be worked out on allocating responsibility among the telecom operators, robotics vendors, software providers and medical personnel especially when something goes wrong with the surgery. But this could become a major health industry for India with huge foreign exchange earning potential.

Once all these issues are sorted out, there is going to be huge opportunity for Indian medical fraternity. Medical treatment is very expensive in the advanced economies. This is one of the reasons that medical tourism has caught on particularly from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Some patients do come from Pakistan as well for complicated medical and surgical treatment. Many come from Gulf countries because it is much cheaper in India.

In countries like United Kingdom and Canada, healthcare is available to all and

provided by the state but getting an appointment to meet a specialist doctor is not easy and take months together. This puts patients in jeopardy. If telemedicine and remote surgery from India is encouraged, there could be great relief to patients in those countries. In US, private hospitals are easily approachable but they are cost prohibitive and if there is a major and complicated ailment, the entire lifetime savings will be wiped out in treatment. Telemedicine and remote surgery from India could be a cheaper alternative.

As it is digitization has helped India to improve its governance. Direct benefit transfer for various social schemes of the government has helped to plug leakages to a large extent. Digitisation of ration cards has eliminated bogus cards. These have ensured government resources running into lakhs and crores of rupees.

Just as India dominates in software development, healthcare delivery could be the next big area where Indian doctors sitting in India could provide healthcare to millions of patients world over through telemedicine and remote robotic surgery. With 5G taking off soon across India there is scope for not only remote surgery but also several other technology enabled service delivery. Of course both the centre and states will have to gear themselves and create conducive environment to cash-in on this huge opportunity. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword												
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28					29							

ACROSS						DOWN					
1	Gain	7	Female swan	12	Obtains	1	Mild explosion	2	Metal-bearing rock	3	Fails to recall
5	Looked narrowly	13	Incite	14	Lose colour	4	Notion	5	Quickly (mus)	6	Found fault
8	Leaves out	15	Measure of length	16	Emotional state	9	Dutch cheese	10	Not bright	13	Retributive justice
11	To one side	17	Help	18	Reddish brown	14	Provender	15	Crown	17	Acting part
19	Falsehood	20	Tree	21	Northern Ireland	16	Term of respect	18	Obtuse	19	Become firm
22	Dark-coloured viscid substance					20	Dark-coloured viscid substance				

SUDOKU:3649												
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Yesterday's Solution 3648												
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5	3	8	6	2	4	7	9	1				
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Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1657												
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### DISCLAIMER

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



SEVA SUCHNAYEIN
ALL THE SAILINGS ARE SUBJECT TO WEATHER CONDITIONS
<b>INTER ISLAND SECTOR:</b> · MV Kalighat will sail for Car Nicobar on 27.09.2022 (Tue) at 1500 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 28.09.2022 (Wed) at 1600 Hrs from Car Nicobar. Passenger Tickets for onward journey will be issued on 27.09.2022 at Haddo Wharf two hours prior to the departure time of the vessel based on verification of Covid Booster/Precautionary Dose Certificate or Negative RTPCR Test Report provided from the RTPCR testing Centre, Port Blair. · Sindhu will sail for Campbell Bay via Nancowry on 29.09.2022 (Thu) at 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 01.10.2022 (Sat) at 0900 Hrs from Campbell Bay via Nancowry. Passenger Tickets for onward journey will be issued on 29.09.2022 at Haddo Wharf two hours prior to the departure time of the vessel based on verification of Covid Booster/Precautionary Dose Certificate or Negative RTPCR Test Report provided from the RTPCR testing Centre, Port Blair. · MV Kalighat will sail for Campbell Bay via Little Andaman, Car Nicobar, Chowra, Teressa, Katchal & Nancowry on 04.10.2022 (Tue) at 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 07.10.2022 (Fri) 1200 Hrs from Campbell Bay via same route. Passenger Tickets for onward journey will be issued on 04.10.2022 at Haddo Wharf two hours prior to the departure time of the vessel based on verification of Covid Booster/Precautionary Dose Certificate or Negative RTPCR Test Report provided from the RTPCR testing Centre, Port Blair. · MV Campbell Bay will sail for Campbell Bay via Nancowry on 08.10.2022 (Sat) at 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 10.10.2022 (Mon) at 0900 Hrs from Campbell Bay via Nancowry. Passenger Tickets for onward journey will be issued on 08.10.2022 at Haddo Wharf two hours prior to the departure time of the vessel based on verification of Covid Booster/Precautionary Dose Certificate or Negative RTPCR Test Report provided from the RTPCR testing Centre, Port Blair.
<b>LITTLE ANDAMAN:</b> ·Sindhu will sail for Little Andaman on 25.09.2022 (Sun) at 2000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 26.09.2022 (Mon) at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. ·MV Campbell Bay will sail for Little Andaman on 27.09.2022 (Tue) at 2000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 28.09.2022 (Wed) at 0800 Hrs from Little Andaman. ·Campbell Bay will sail for Little Andaman on 30.09.2022 (Fri) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. ·Campbell Bay will sail for Little Andaman on 02.10.2022 (Sun) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. ·Campbell Bay will sail for Little Andaman on 04.10.2022 (Tue) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. ·Sindhu will sail for Little Andaman on 06.10.2022 (Thu) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. ****Passenger tickets for the above sailing (i.e. for 2nd, 4th & 6th October, 2022) will be issued to the general public from 30.09.2022 onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.
<b>DIGLIPUR &amp; MAYABUNDER:</b> · MV Kalighat will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 29.09.2022 (Thu) at 2100 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 30.09.2022 (Fri) at 1400 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 27.09.2022 onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. · MV Kalighat will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 01.10.2022 (Sat) at 2100 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 02.10.2022 (Sun) at 1400 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 29.09.2022 onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.
<b>FORESHORE SECTOR:</b> Note: Passenger tickets for the Foreshore Sector vessels will be issued to the general public at STARS Ticketing Counters two days prior to her scheduled departure date.
<b>24.09.2022 (SAT) SHAHEED DWEEP &amp; SWARAJ DWEEP</b> MV Dering will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 24.09.2022 (Sat) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1500 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep. MV Bambooka will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 24.09.2022 (Sat) at 0630 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0845 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep. MV Bambooka will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 24.09.2022 (Sat) at 1100 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep. MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 24.09.2022 (Sat) at 1300 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep Jetty and will sail back to Shaheed Dweep on the same day at 1430 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep. MV Chouldari will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 24.09.2022 (Sat) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 25.09.2022 (Sun) at 0500 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.
<b>25.09.2022 (SUN) SHAHEED DWEEP &amp; SWARAJ DWEEP</b> MV Dering will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 25.09.2022 (Sun) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1500 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep. MV Baratang will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 25.09.2022 (Sun) at 0630 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0845 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep. MV Bambooka will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 25.09.2022 (Sun) at 1100 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep. MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 25.09.2022 (Sun) at 1300 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep Jetty and will sail back to Shaheed Dweep on the same day at 1430 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep. MV Baratang will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 25.09.2022 (Sun) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 26.09.2022 (Mon) at 0500 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.
<b>26.09.2022 (MON) SHAHEED DWEEP &amp; SWARAJ DWEEP</b> MV Dering will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 26.09.2022 (Mon) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1500 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep. MV Bambooka will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 26.09.2022 (Mon) at 0630 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0845 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep. MV Bambooka will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 26.09.2022 (Mon) at 1100 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep. MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 26.09.2022 (Mon) at 1300 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep Jetty and will sail back to Shaheed Dweep on the same day at 1430 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep. MV Baratang will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 26.09.2022 (Mon) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 27.09.2022 (Tue) at 0500 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.
<b>RANGAT</b> MV Chouldari will sail for Rangat via Shaheed Dweep, Swaraj Dweep, Kadamtala, Strait Island & Long Island on 26.09.2022 (Mon) at 0700 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on 27.09.2022 (Tue) at 0700 Hrs from Rangat via same route.

## Satyendar Jain PMLA case: Court allows ED petition seeking transfer of case

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 23** --/ A principal district and sessions court here on Friday allowed an Enforcement Directorate (ED) application seeking transfer of the money laundering case against Delhi minister Satyendar Jain to another judge. Raising certain contentions in the case being heard by Special Judge Geetanjali Goel, the agency sought transfer of the matter to any other judge. The case will now be heard by Special Judge Vikas Dhull, Principal District and Sessions Judge Vinay Kumar Gupta said. A detailed order in the matter is awaited. Jain's bail plea is posted for hearing at 2 pm on Friday before Special Judge Dhull. Earlier on September 19, the Principal District and Sessions Judge stayed the trial court's proceedings before Special Judge Goel and posted the matter on September 30. The court also issued notice to Jain and other co-accused in the case on the ED's application seeking transfer of the case to another judge. Challenging the court's order, Jain moved the Supreme Court, which on Wednesday, directed the principal district and sessions court to decide the agency's application for transfer expeditiously by September 22. On Thursday, the court reserved its order on the ED's application following lengthy arguments from both sides. The ED had arrested Jain and two others in the money laundering case based on a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) FIR lodged against the AAP leader in 2017 under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Jain is accused of having laundered money through four companies linked to him. (PTI)

## Karnataka SRTC to introduce Dasara darshan package in Dakshina Kannada district

**MANGALURU, SEPT 23** --/ The Mangaluru division of Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has organised a package tour for the Mangaluru Dasara darshan, which will cover nine major temples in Dakshina Kannada district. The state-run transport body will operate a one-day tour package on all days of the Navaratri festival from September 26 to October 5. Tourists and pilgrims may book tickets and visit prominent temples of the coastal district during Navaratri, divisional controller Rajesh Shetty said in a release on Thursday. As part of the tour package, the bus will take passengers to Mangaladevi temple, Polali Sri Rajarajeshwari temple, Sunkadakatte Sri Ambika Annapourneshwari temple at Gurupura, Kateel Sri Durgaparameshwari temple, Bappanadu Sri Durgaparameshwari temple, Sasihithlu Sri Bhagavathi temple and beach. It will also go to Chitrapura Sri Durgaparameshwari temple, Urwa Sri Mariyamma temple and Kudroli Sri Gokarnanatha temple where the idols of Navadurga are installed as part of the Mangaluru Dasara festival. The fare for adults will be Rs 300 and Rs 250 for children, he said. Shetty said the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) Nagara Sarige buses will be used for the package tour. He said it is for the first time that KSRTC is introducing such a package for the convenience of tourists and devotees, who through the district during the Navaratri festival. The one-day tour, from 8 am to 8.30 pm, will start from the KSRTC bus stand. The corporation plans to operate more than one bus per day depending on the response from people, he said. (PTI)

## Go To The People Project continued at Lunglei District



**LUNGLEI, SEPT 23** --/ 'Go To The People': a people-centric scheme to deliver Government services at the doorsteps of citizens in far flung areas was implemented today at Tawpui S village in Lunglei District. The Scheme was initiated in Lunglei District from November last year through the efforts of the office of the Deputy Commissioner, and so far has had successful runs at Huaruang and Thenhlm villages in Lunglei District. At a short inaugural function held at Tawpui S High School, Lunglei DC Kulothungan A thanked the participating Government Departments for extending their cooperation towards successful implementation of the Scheme, and expressed hope that the scheme would go a long way in fostering a culture of good governance for the District. "It is very difficult for villagers to keep traveling to the District capital for their different requirements from the Government, and I hope that many issues faced by citizens will be resolved today," the Deputy Commissioner stated, while also thanking the Village Council leaders and NGOs for their support in implementing the project. The various services extended to the people at today's program are: 1 Deputy Commissioner Tribal Certificates, Residential Certificates, Income Certificates Religion, Non-Marriage Certificates 2 Medical Superintendent Free Clinic with Specialist doctors 3 Chief Medical Officer Mobile Clinic, Covid-19 Vaccination 4 District AH & Vety Free Clinic & Free Vaccination 5 AERO/BLOs Regarding Electoral roll 6 Lead District Manager PMJDY, PMJJBY, PMSB Yetc. Account opening. 7 DPO Anemia Screening, PMMVY 8 DC+DPO Aadhar update 9 District Agriculture

## Kerala HC raps Bharat Jodo Yatra organisers for its flex boards, banners along national highways

**KOCHI, SEPT 23** --/ The Kerala High Court has strongly criticised the Congress-led Bharat Jodo Yatra for the flex boards and banners erected along the side of the roads and said the government departments, including police, have chosen to turn a blind eye towards it. Justice Devan Ramachandran, in an order issued on Thursday evening, said it was a tragedy that the orders of the court and the competent authorities are "given absolutely no respect" by persons and entities "who are in charge of the future of this nation". The court made the observations during an urgent hearing requested by amicus curiae Harish Vasudevan, who filed a report along with photographs, to show that a particular political party, while conducting procession across Kerala, has erected a large number of boards, banners, flags

## We will not oppose if Pilot is made CM: Rajasthan minister Rajendra Gudha

**JAIPUR, SEPT 23** --/ Rajasthan minister Rajendra Gudha, one of the six BSP turned Congress MLAs, on Thursday said they would not oppose if Sachin Pilot is made the chief minister in case Ashok Gehlot becomes the party president and quits the CM post. Gudha, who is Minister of State for Panchayati Raj and Rural Development and considered close to Gehlot, cleared his stand that he is not with any face and said the six MLAs would support anyone whom the party high command chooses to run the government. The statement of Gudha came after former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi battled for the "one-man, one-post" concept in lines with the party's Chintan Shivir reforms amid possibility of Gehlot contesting election for the post of national president of the party. Rahul's statement made in Kochi created a buzz that Gehlot, who is seen as the frontrunner in the party presidential poll, may have to step down as CM if he becomes the party president. "We are with the decision of the party leadership. Whatever decision Sonia ji, Rahul ji and Priyanka ji take, we all six will welcome that. We are with the party," Gudha told reporters here. "Even if Bharosi Lal ji is made (CM) by Sonia ji, we are with him," he said when asked whether he would oppose if Sachin Pilot is made the CM. Bharosi Lal is a Congress MLA. The BSP turncoats had supported Gehlot during political crisis in July 2020 after the then deputy CM Sachin Pilot revolted against the Rajasthan CM. (PTI)

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 23** --/ The Supreme Court on Friday clubbed and transferred to the Delhi Police all FIRs registered against journalist Navika Kumar over the controversial remarks made by ex-BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma on Prophet Mohammad during a TV debate moderated by her. A bench of Justices M R Shah and Krishna Murari said no coercive action would be taken against Kumar for a period of eight weeks so that she can avail remedies in the interim period. It also granted liberty to Kumar to move the Delhi High Court for quashing of the lead FIR. The court also said that any

advertising agency/printer without its name or address embedded on it is illegal and that necessary action against them should also be taken," the court said. The court wondered why it was necessary for it to keep on reminding the officers that apart from the specific orders of this Court, the state government has issued circulars, as also the road safety authority having issued specific notifications prohibiting such actions. "These illegal installations cause great danger to motorists since their attention would be distracted, while moving through the highway; and there is also the real danger of some of these installations coming loose and creating havoc, particularly with respect to two wheelers, as we have seen in other parts of the country earlier...", the court said. Justice Ramachandran said there is also a problem of such installations being

## Prophet row: SC transfers all FIRs against journalist Navika Kumar to Delhi Police

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 23** --/ The Supreme Court on Friday clubbed and transferred to the Delhi Police all FIRs registered against journalist Navika Kumar over the controversial remarks made by ex-BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma on Prophet Mohammad during a TV debate moderated by her. A bench of Justices M R Shah and Krishna Murari said no coercive action would be taken against Kumar for a period of eight weeks so that she can avail remedies in the interim period. It also granted liberty to Kumar to move the Delhi High Court for quashing of the lead FIR. The court also said that any

## Raju Srivastava left BJP MLAs in splits during important party meeting: UP minister recalls

**NOIDA, SEPT 23** --/ With his characteristic humour, Raju Srivastava had made hundreds of BJP legislators in Uttar Pradesh burst into peals of laughter during an all-important party meeting after the state assembly elections earlier this year, recalls state minister Asim Arun. The former IPS officer-tuned-social welfare minister (independent charge) of Uttar Pradesh paid glowing tributes to the veteran comedian-actor, who was cremated in Delhi on Thursday after he passed away during treatment at the AIIMS on Wednesday. Srivastava (58) hailed from Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur and was also a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He had moved to Mumbai in the 1980s where he eventually made a name for himself in the world of comedy through stage shows, films and TV programmes. He was also appointed as the chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Film Development Council in the Yogi Adityanath-led government. In his remembrance message for the comic, Arun (51) said he used to watch Srivastava's stage shows from the 1980s, and later when he was posted as police commissioner of Kanpur, he got an opportunity to know him closely. "His last show, which I saw, was unique. He was invited to the meeting of the newly-formed BJP Legislature Party. As soon as he started his performance, he said... 'Mere saamne Uttar Pradesh ke chhathe hue log baithe hain' and everyone in the meeting hall erupted in laughter as soon as he said this, the minister and a first-time MLA wrote on

social media. "Today as he embarks on a new journey, he will always remain with us through his memories and videos," the minister added. The Hindi phrase "chhathe hue log has a negative connotation referring to a mischievous people or rogues but Srivastava had used it humorously for the elected public representatives. The veteran comic was also known for mimicking politicians during live shows in their presence, always invoking laughter from the crowds and his subject, too. The BJP had won the Uttar Pradesh elections whose results were declared in March following which the first meeting of its legislature party that comprised around 250 MLAs, including Yogi Adityanath, was called to decide future strategy. (PTI)

### PRESS NOTE

## ADMISSION EXTENDED AT MAHATMA GANDHI GOVT. COLLEGE MAYABUNDER

As per the advise of A & N Administration, MGGC would like to extend the last date of submission of online applications to various UG courses offered by this institution upto 25/09/2022 (Sunday). Hence, the aspirants can avail the facility through the Common College Admission portal (CCAP) [url:collegeadmission.andaman.gov.in](http://url:collegeadmission.andaman.gov.in) This is the last chance and there will be no further extension anymore.

Principal  
M.G. Govt. College  
Mayabunder



## Have to ensure projects aimed at bringing ease of business are not unnecessarily stalled in the name of environment : PM to ministers

**Modi targets 'urban Naxals', says they are getting support from political parties**

**AHMEDABAD, SEPT 23** /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday alleged that "urban Naxals and anti-development elements" with political backing had stalled the construction of Sardar Sarovar dam on the Narmada river in Gujarat for many years by running a campaign that it would harm the environment.

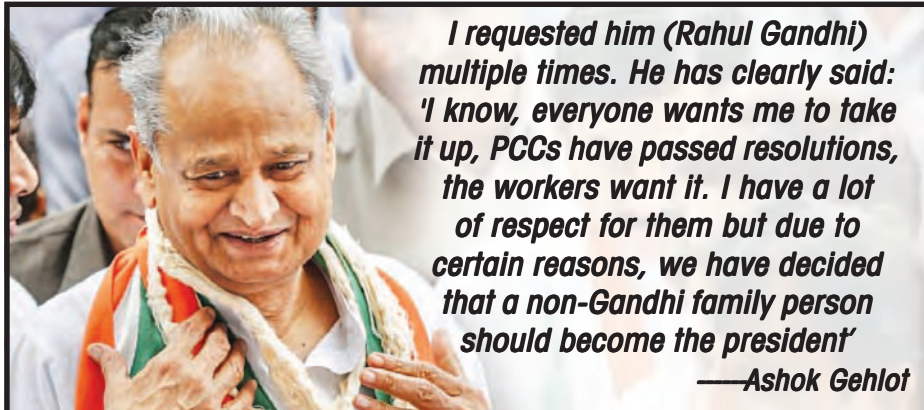
Such "urban Naxals" are still active and getting support from various institutions to stall development projects in the name of environment protection, Modi said while urging environment ministers from different states to ensure that projects aimed at bringing 'ease of doing business' or 'ease of life' do not get stalled unnecessarily. He also asked the state governments to adopt a balanced approach in granting environment clearances "to counter the conspiracy of such people". The Prime Minister was addressing the environment ministers from states after virtually inaugurating the National Conference of Environment Ministers at Ekta Nagar in Narmada district of Gujarat via video conference. "Urban Naxals and anti-development elements having political backing had stalled the construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam by running a campaign that the project will harm the environment.

Huge amount of money was wasted due to this delay. Now, when the dam is complete, you can very well judge how dubious their claims were," he said. Modi added that contrary to the claims that the project would harm the environment, the area surrounding the dam has now become a "teerth kshetra" or place of pilgrimage for environment lovers. The Prime Minister was referring to the famous 'Statue of Unity' and many iconic tourist attractions, such as jungle safari, valley of flowers, and many gardens that came up near the 182-metre tall monument. 'Urban Naxal' term is often used by some segments of the political spectrum to describe sympathisers of the Naxalism cause as well as certain social activists. Last month, Gujarat chief minister Bhupendra Patel had also alleged that "urban Naxals" had opposed the Sardar Sarovar dam to deprive the state and arid Kutch region of water and development. He had labelled activist and Narmada Bachao Andolan leader Medha Patkar as an "urban Naxal". Cautioning the ministers, the Prime Minister said that urban Naxals are still active and get support from various institutions as well as political parties to stall developmental projects in the name of environment protection. "These people stall projects by influencing even the

judiciary and the World Bank. I urge you to make sure that projects aimed at bringing 'ease of doing business' or 'ease of life' do not get unnecessarily stalled in the name of the environment," he said. "The states should adopt a balanced approach in granting environment clearance to counter the conspiracy of such people," the prime minister added. Expressing displeasure over the unnecessary delay in the issuance of environmental clearances for various projects, Modi said development will pick up pace only when these clearances are given quickly, which should be done without any compromise. "Nearly 6,000 applications for environmental clearance and nearly 6,500 for forest clearance are still pending in different states. As you all know, such pendency escalates project cost. All of us need to try to reduce this pendency. Only genuine ones should be kept pending," the Prime Minister said. He said that granting speedy environment clearance will prove to be a "win-win" situation for both economy and environment. The Prime Minister gave an example of the recently-built Pragati Maidan tunnel in Delhi aimed at easing the traffic flow. "By using this tunnel, vehicles are saving nearly 55 lakh litres of fuel every year," he added. "This resulted in reduction of 13,000

tonnes of carbon emission. We would have needed six lakh trees to absorb this much carbon. Flyovers, roads and railway projects help in reducing carbon emission. Do not ignore this angle while granting environment clearances," he said. On the occasion, the Prime Minister made a pitch for providing training to the forest staff, strengthening the mechanism to tackle forest fires, using forest waste, such as dry leaves, to produce industrial fuel and adopting participative and integrated approach for better results. He also urged the states to start working on implementing the Centre's vehicle scrappage policy by first scrapping old and unfit government vehicles so that the process begins.

"I also want the states to start working on the bio-fuel policy by using bio-fuel in their official vehicles as much as possible. We need to own up the policies and implement them on the ground. Ethanol blending in fuel will also help farmers as they will get income on their farm waste," he said. Modi also urged states to promote circular economy, which according to him, would help the country in better solid waste management and eliminate single-use plastic. (PTI)



*I requested him (Rahul Gandhi) multiple times. He has clearly said: 'I know, everyone wants me to take it up, PCCs have passed resolutions, the workers want it. I have a lot of respect for them but due to certain reasons, we have decided that a non-Gandhi family person should become the president'*  
—Ashok Gehlot

## Gehlot announces AICC president election bid

**Says call on Rajasthan CM will be taken by Sonia, AICC in-charge**

New Delhi/Kochi, Sept 23 /--/ Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot became the first person to announce his candidature for the AICC presidential poll on Friday, a day before the nomination process begins, and said Rahul Gandhi has told him that no one from the Gandhi family should become the next party chief. Gehlot also said the call on his successor to head the Rajasthan government will be taken by the party's interim president, Sonia Gandhi, and the Congress's Rajasthan in-charge, Ajay Maken. The Rajasthan chief minister's remarks came a day after former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi battled for the "one-man, one-post" concept in the party, in line with the Chintan Shivir reforms earlier this year. With Shashi Tharoor likely to be the second contender and the names of several others also doing the rounds for joining the fray, Gehlot said the aim should be that all Congress members work together after the poll to strengthen the party. Talking to reporters in Kochi, the 71-year-old leader said: "I will fix the date (to submit the nomination papers) after going back (to Rajasthan), but I have decided that I will have to contest. It is a question of democracy and let us make a new start." Gehlot also said Rahul Gandhi has told him that he respects the wish of the party workers that he should take charge of the organisation but no one from the Gandhi family would become the next Congress president. "I requested him multiple times. He has clearly said 'I know, everyone wants me to take it up, PCCs have passed resolutions, the workers want it. I have a lot of respect for them but due to certain reasons, we have decided that a non-

Gandhi family person should become the president," Gehlot said. With Thiruvananthapuram MP Tharoor likely to enter the poll fray, Gehlot said other "Congress friends" may also contest but what matters is unity and the need to strengthen the organisation at all levels. "There are Congress friends. Even if they contest, there is no issue. After the results, we should work together to strengthen the Congress at the block, village and district levels and also move forward making our (Congress) thought process as the base, so that we emerge as a strong opposition," he added. Considering the present situation in the country, there is a need for a strong Opposition, the veteran Congress leader said. Later in the day, talking to reporters in Shirdi, Gehlot said the debate on "one man, one post" is unnecessary and he would like to serve the people of his state all his life. He also said his statements on wanting to serve the people of Rajasthan are being interpreted in different ways. With the speculation over Rahul contesting the AICC presidential poll coming to an end with Gehlot's remarks, Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury hailed the former party chief for taking a "principled" stance and called him a "natural leader". "It was the universal demand from the workers of our party that Rahul Gandhi should assume the charge of AICC president. But from the very first day, he has been declining the job. He has decided that someone from outside the Gandhi family should take it up," Chowdhury told PTI. "It is a very principled stand. He is a natural leader. When he says anything, he will draw the attention of the country. He certainly holds a special place in the heart of the common Congress worker," he said. (PTI)

## PFI hartal turns violent in parts of Kerala; vehicles, shops damaged

- HC takes suo motu cognizance, declares action 'illegal'
- Activists detained in Pune while protesting against NIA action

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/PUNE, SEPT 23** /--/ Masked men and miscreants went on a rampage in different parts of Kerala on Friday during the dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the Popular Front of India (PFI), under the lens for alleged terror activities, damaging state-run buses and ambulance, injuring policemen and commoners and vandalising shops and threatening the public.

The Kerala High Court took cognizance on its own, the "illegal" hartal, and initiated a case saying the flash protest was prima facie a contempt of court as it violated a 2019 HC order on such agitations. The violent incidents affected normal life in many parts of the southern state, a day after the National Investigation Agency led multi-agency pan-India raids against PFI, accused of being a radical Islamist outfit, arresting over 100 persons. The court, which said holding hartals were banned by it earlier, also directed the state administration to take stern action against those who violate the court order banning hartals. Cutting across cities towns, the hartal supporters took out protest marches, burnt tyres on roads, blocked vehicles and forcefully downed the shutters of shops in various places. Face-covering gangs unleashed violence and attacked shops in Kozhikode, Kottayam and Ernakulam districts. Kerala State Road Transport buses, freight lorries and airport vehicles were widely attacked and pelted with stones across the state. An ambulance was not spared from stone-pelting in Thrissur district, causing concern. At least 50 KSRTC buses were damaged with their windscreens smashed and seats damaged. Over 10 of its employees suffered injuries in the stone pelting and related incidents, official sources said. The KSRTC management put out a facebook post against the attack on its buses, and the drivers could be seen plying the vehicles wearing

helmets in many places to escape from the stone pelting. Besides KSRTC employees, police personnel, some bus and lorry drivers and commuters suffered injuries in various incidents.

In Erattupetta town of Kottayam district, police had to resort to lathi-charge to disperse activists supporting the hartal when they tried to block vehicles after gathering in large numbers, closed the shops and threatened the people who were travelling in private vehicles. A hartal supporter allegedly hit two police personnel, who were on patrolling duty, with his motorcycle when they tried to stop him from abusing commuters at Pallimukku in Kollam. Though he managed to escape from the spot, a manhunt was on to nab him, police said. A lottery shop, kept

on a national highway in Kannur which blocked traffic in the area. Local media reported that a petrol bomb was hurled at a vehicle which was carrying newspapers for distribution at Narayanpara and a country-made bomb was thrown at a local BJP office in Mattannoor by unidentified persons- both in Kannur district.

A 15-year-old girl and an auto-rickshaw driver suffered minor injuries in the stone pelting allegedly by PFI activists in Kozhikode and Kannur respectively. A lorry driver, who was on his way to Erode in Tamil Nadu, suffered severe injuries on his nose and eyes in stone-pelting stones in Kozhikode. "They attacked us deliberately with an intention to destroy the lorry. The vehicle was parked on the roadside

up by local people when they tried to forcefully down the shutters of shops. Angry local people reacted strongly when the protesters asked them to close the shops, beat them up and handed one of them to the police at the Central Bazar in Payyannur in this politically-volatile northern district.

Following PFI's hartal call made on Thursday, the state police chief had given directions to beef up security across Kerala and to take stern action against those who violate the law. DGP Anil Kant said the law and order situation in the state was under control and additional forces were deployed in place wherever it was required. Sources said a large number of the activists of the PFI and the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) were taken into custody by police across the state for breaking laws and engaging in violence on the hartal day.

Meanwhile, in Pune, more than 35 members of the PFI were detained on Friday while protesting outside the Pune district collectorate against nationwide raids on the outfit by the National Investigation Agency a day earlier. Senior Inspector Pratap Mankar of Bundgarden police station said 35-40 PFI activists were detained as they did not have permission from authorities to hold a protest. In a massive crackdown on the PFI, multi-agency teams spearheaded by the NIA had, on Thursday, arrested 106 leaders and activists of the radical Islamic outfit in near simultaneous raids in 15 states for allegedly supporting terror activities in the country. Officials has said the raids by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the police forces of the states concerned were spread across 93 locations in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Goa, West Bengal, Bihar and Manipur. (PTI)



**PFI members being produced in Bhopal court on Friday a day after raids led by NIA**

open at Sankranthi Kavala in Kottayam, was destroyed by miscreants while some freight lorries, which were on their way from Mangaluru, were stopped and their keys snatched away by them

when they came and attacked it. I went to a private hospital for first aid and now I am going to the government hospital for a detailed check-up," he said. In Kannur, a group of PFI activists were beaten

## Violent unrest continues in Iran, state TV suggests 26 dead

**DUBAI, SEPT 23** /--/ Protesters across Iran continued to clash violently with security forces early Friday following the death of a young woman in police custody, as Iranian state TV suggested the death toll from the unrest could be as high as 26, without offering details.

Although the scope of the protests across some dozen Iranian cities and towns remains unclear, the movement represents the widest unrest since 2019, when rights groups said hundreds of people were killed in a violent crackdown. Iran has also disrupted internet access to the outside world, according to internet traffic monitor Netblocks, and tightened restrictions on popular platforms used to organise rallies like Instagram and WhatsApp. An anchor on state TV said late on Thursday that 26 protesters and policemen had been killed since the protests erupted last Saturday after the funeral of the 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, without elaborating on how



**Demonstrators scuffle with riot police, during a protest following death of a young woman in police custody**

authorities reached that figure. The anchor said official statistics would be released later, but in past times of turmoil the Iranian government has not offered official death tolls. The unrest has killed at least 11 people according to a tally by The Associated Press, based on statements from state-run and semiofficial media. Most recently, the deputy governor of Qazvin, Abolhasan Kabiri, said that a citizen and paramilitary officer had been killed in unrest that rocked two cities in the northwestern province. The crisis unfolding in Iran began as a public outpouring over the death of Amini, a young woman from a northwestern Kurdish town who was arrested by the country's morality police in Tehran last week for allegedly violating its strictly-enforced dress code. The police said she died of a heart attack and was not mistreated, but her family has cast doubt on that account. Amini's death has sparked sharp

condemnation from Western countries and the United Nations, and touched a national nerve.

Hundreds of Iranians across at least 13 cities from the capital, Tehran, to Amini's northwest Kurdish hometown of Saqez have poured into the streets, voicing pent-up anger over social and political repression. Authorities have alleged that unnamed foreign countries and opposition groups are trying to foment unrest. The death has tapped into broader antigovernment sentiment in the Islamic Republic and especially the frustration of women, wrote political risk firm Eurasia Group, noting that Iran's hardliners have intensified their crackdown on women's clothing over the past year since former judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi became president. In the cold calculus of Iranian leaders ... a more forceful response is required to quell the unrest, the group added. (AP)



# Hong Kong to end mandatory hotel quarantine for travellers

**HONG KONG, SEPT 23**/--/Hong Kong's leader announced the city would no longer require incoming travellers to quarantine in designated hotels as it seeks to remain competitive and open up globally after nearly two years. Incoming travellers will also no longer need a negative PCR test within 48 hours before boarding a plane to Hong Kong, the city's chief executive John Lee said Friday at a news conference. Instead, they will need to present a negative COVID-19 result from a rapid antigen test conducted within 24 hours before the flight. The measures will come into effect Monday.

While we can't control the trend of the epidemic, we must allow the maximum room to allow connectivity with the world so that we can have economic momentum and to reduce inconvenience to arriving travellers, said Lee, who also said that authorities will not roll back the measures announced Friday. He said that there must be a balance between risks and economic growth." From Monday, travellers into Hong Kong will have to undergo three days of home monitoring. If they test negative for

COVID-19 after three days, they will be allowed into venues such as restaurants and bars. They must also undergo several mandatory PCR tests, including one on arrival, as well as on their second, fourth and sixth days in Hong Kong, coupled with daily antigen rapid tests every day for their first week. Hong Kong's easing of travel curbs sparked a rush for flight bookings, with airline Cathay Pacific's website experiencing high traffic after the announcement was made. Visitors to the site had to wait in a virtual queue to enter.

The city's daily COVID-19 infections have fallen to below 6,000 cases a day, from over 10,000 daily cases early this month. A large majority are local infections. For nearly two years, Hong Kong required overseas arrivals in the city to serve a period of mandatory quarantine in designated hotels. At one point, the city had among the world's longest quarantine periods at 21 days of mandatory isolation. Neighboring Taiwan is expected to do the same next month. This leaves mainland China as one of the only places in the world that will still require travelers to quarantine

on arrival. Hong Kong has for most of the pandemic aligned with China's zero-COVID strategy.

Over the past 2 1/2 years, Hong Kong authorities have imposed strict social distancing measures and locked down residential buildings with confirmed COVID-19 infections to mass-test residents. As the rest of the world reopened borders, businesses urged Hong Kong authorities to come up with an exit strategy to the pandemic in order to remain competitive amid a brain drain as tens of thousands of residents left the city.

Several companies also moved their offices to countries like Singapore as they sought relief from the city's restrictions. Singapore had eased travel curbs and relaxed coronavirus restrictions months before Hong Kong, sparking concerns that Hong Kong may lose out in competitiveness as an international financial center and regional business hub. Lee said authorities will keep monitoring the epidemic situation in Hong Kong to determine if further relaxation is possible, adding he was optimistic that the loosening of requirements

will be welcomed by those who wish to enter Hong Kong. If there are positive developments as we progress there will be more room for us to do extra measures so that we can have more movement, more activities and more room for us to go about different (activities), he said.

The easing of measures comes as Hong Kong prepares to hold several high-profile events, including the Rugby Sevens tournament in November and an international banking summit. The Rugby Sevens is making a comeback in the city for the first time since the pandemic began. In a news conference Friday, organizers said that risk mitigation measures will be taken for the tournament, which includes making sure that all players and officials involved have at least two COVID-19 vaccinations. Other measures taken include operating within a competition bubble," which ensures that competing teams will be sequestered on arrival, during the tournament and until departure. On arrival, teams will be transported directly from the airport to designated hotels and will have dedicated team transport and training venues. Organizers said

10,000 Rugby Sevens tickets will go on sale to the public Sept. 28. The return of the Hong Kong Sevens means business is returning too. And I know we can't wait for both to fill the stands, and the streets and shops, restaurants and hopefully bars as well, said financial secretary Paul Chan at the Rugby Sevens news conference. The momentum will keep on building. And long beyond. There will be no stopping our many prestigious international events, Chan said.

The relaxation of travel requirements drew optimistic reactions from some residents in the city. I think (reopening) has to be step-by-step, it's positive, said Samuel Tsang, a Hong Kong resident.

However, there are others who believe that three days of monitoring for arrivals is still an inconvenient measure. It's too late. Everybody else has opened up for such a long time," said Eva Leung. The economy has become like this, no one is coming, she said, adding that it's still a hassle, especially for business travelers who have to move around the city for work. "It's still not convenient. (AP)

## At least 4 killed, 10 wounded after blast near Kabul mosque

**KABUL, SEPT 23**/--/At least four people are dead and 10 wounded after explosion went off near a mosque in Afghanistan's capital of Kabul on Friday, with a hospital confirming the number of casualties. A column of black smoke rose into the sky and shots rang



out several minutes after the blast in the city's diplomatic quarter.

The Italian Emergency Hospital in Kabul said it had received 14 casualties and that four people were dead on arrival. Khalid Zadrán, a spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said the blast targeted worshippers leaving the mosque after Friday prayers.

Interior Minister spokesman Abdul Nafi Takor said the blast went off on the main road near the mosque. He said the cause was under investigation. Takor said police teams were at the site and that an investigation was underway.

Mosques have previously been a target for attacks. The blast took place near the Wazir Akbar Khan mosque which, in 2020, was struck by a bomb that killed two people, including the mosque's prayer leader. (AP)

## UK slashes personal, corporate taxes in bid to spur growth

**LONDON, SEPT 23**/--/Britain's new government on Friday announced a sweeping plan of tax cuts it said would be funded by borrowing and revenues generated by anticipated growth, as part of contentious moves to combat the cost-of-living crisis and bolster a faltering economy. But Treasury chief Kwasi Kwarteng offered few details on the cost of the program and its impact on the government's own targets for reducing deficits and borrowing. The government's two-pronged approach offers short-term help for homes and businesses struggling with soaring energy costs while betting that lower taxes and reduced red tape will spur economic growth and increase tax revenues in coming years.

We need a new approach for a new era, focused on growth, Kwarteng told lawmakers in the House of Commons.

Friday's statement was billed as a fiscal event rather than a budget, because it wasn't accompanied by an analysis of its cost from the independent Office for Budget Responsibility. Opponents said the government was dodging scrutiny.

The plan was immediately attacked by the opposition Labour Party for favouring the interests of business over working people and failing to provide any analysis about the impact on the government's fiscal targets.

It is a budget without figures, a menu without prices," said Rachel Reeves, Labour's spokeswoman on Treasury issues. What has the chancellor got to hide?

Many economists have expressed concern that the government's policies will lead to a sharp increase in borrowing, undermining confidence in the British economy.

The pound on Friday fell below USD 1.12 for the first time since March 1985.

The program announced on Friday reverses many of the initiatives announced by former

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, another Conservative. The centre-right party has led Britain for the last 12 years.

For example, Kwarteng announced that he was reversing a hike in national insurance taxes introduced by Johnson's government in May to boost spending on health and social care.

Kwarteng said the government would maintain expected funding for the National Health Service but he didn't say how.

He also said the government would cut the basic rate of income tax to 19 per cent next year, from the current 20 per cent.

The top rate will drop to 40 per cent from 45 per cent. He also cancelled a planned six percentage point increase in the corporate tax rate, leaving it at 19 per cent.

This was the biggest tax-cutting event since 1972, it is not very mini, said Paul Johnson, director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, an independent think-tank that scrutinises government spending. It is half a century since we have seen tax cuts announced on this scale.

The announcement comes just three weeks after Prime Minister Liz Truss took office.

She has said the Conservative government's core mission is lowering taxes to drive economic growth and declared this week that she was ready to make unpopular decisions such as removing a cap on bankers' bonuses to attract jobs and investment.

The plan runs counter to the view of many Conservatives that governments shouldn't rack up huge debts that taxpayers will eventually have to pay.

Reeves criticised the government for expecting taxpayers to foot the bill for its initiatives, rather than increasing a tax on the windfall profits of energy producers benefiting from soaring prices for oil and natural gas. A cost-of-living crisis driven by

steeply climbing energy costs and slowing economic growth are the biggest challenges Truss faces.

Inflation stands at 9.9 per cent, near the highest Britain has seen since the 1980s, and is predicted to peak at 11 per cent in October.

The government denied it was gambling the economy on a dash for growth, but many economists said it was taking a huge risk by allowing borrowing to balloon while the economy is weak and inflation is high.

The Bank of England said on Thursday that the UK may already be in recession, defined as two consecutive quarters of economic contraction.

It expects gross domestic product to fall by 0.1 per cent in the third quarter, below its August projection of 0.4 per cent growth.

That would be a second quarterly decline after official estimates showed output fell by 0.1 per cent in the previous three-month period.

In the past two weeks, the government has announced that it would cap gas and electricity bills for households and businesses, amid fears that the poorest won't be able to afford to heat their homes and companies will go bust this winter.

Kwarteng said this initiative would be funded by borrowing.

Kwarteng also announced new investment zones across England where the government will offer tax cuts for businesses and help create jobs.

He will also give details on how the government aims to accelerate dozens of major new infrastructure projects, including in transportation and energy. Truss who is inspired by Margaret Thatcher's small state, free market economics has insisted that growing the economy and tax cuts for businesses will benefit everyone in the country.

But critics say Truss's right-wing instincts are the wrong response to the UK economic crisis. (AP)

## UN rights experts present evidence of war crimes in Ukraine

**GENEVA, SEPT 23**/--/A team of experts commissioned by the UN's top human rights body to look into rights violations in Ukraine said Friday its initial investigation turned up evidence of war crimes in the country following Russia's invasion nearly seven months ago. The experts from the Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, mandated by Human Rights Council earlier this year, have so far focused on four regions Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy. Presenting their most extensive findings so far, they cited testimonies by former detainees of beatings, electric shocks and forced nudity in Russian detention facilities, and expressed grave concerns about executions in the four regions.

We were struck by the large number of executions in the areas that we visited. The commission is currently investigating such deaths in 16 towns and settlements, Erik Mose, the commission chairman, told the council. He didn't specify who or which side in the war allegedly committed the killings. Mose said his team had received and was documenting credible allegations regarding many more cases of executions. During a 10-day June trip to Ukraine, the team visited Bucha, a city outside Kyiv where Ukrainian authorities found mass graves and bodies strewn in the streets after Russian forces pulled out in late March.

The findings echo reports by news outlets and others of the destruction, death and despair in Ukraine since Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion on Feb. 24. The commission's work could ultimately contribute to the work of International Criminal Court prosecutors who could bring charges over war crimes in Ukraine, although it remains uncertain whether Russia or other alleged perpetrators will ever face justice. Anton Korynevych, ambassador-at-large for Ukraine's Foreign Ministry, joined envoys from a number of Western countries who spoke out against Moscow's war in the wake of the commission's presentation. Russia's delegation boycotted the council meeting.

Korynevych, speaking by video, called for the creation of a special tribunal that would have jurisdiction over the crime of aggression against Ukraine and investigate senior Russian political and military leaders who were allegedly responsible. He

said said accountability was crucial for rights violations and atrocities linked to Russia's aggression but also highlighted how the effects of the war has 'rippled through the world and put numerous countries on the verge of hunger, exacerbated extreme poverty, created the threat of nuclear catastrophe unseen before and harmed the livelihoods of millions worldwide. Investigators for the Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine visited 27 towns and settlements, as well as graves and detention and torture centers; interviewed more than 150 victims and witnesses; and met with advocacy groups and government officials, Mose said.

Based on the evidence gathered by the commission, it has concluded that war crimes have been committed in Ukraine, he said. He said the team had examined two incidents of ill-treatment against Russian soldiers by Ukrainian forces. Mose said an unspecified number of Russian soldiers were found to have committed crimes of sexual or gender-based violence with victims ranging in age from 4 to 82 years old. The commission plans to gradually expand its investigation, with areas of interest including allegations of filtration camps for people being detained or deported, the forced transfer of people, and allegations of expedited adoption of children.

The evidence of Russia's atrocities becomes more horrifying by the day, most recently with the uncovering of mass graves in Izium, where the bodies show signs of torture, Michele Taylor, the U.S. ambassador to the Human Rights Council, said, referring to a Kharkiv region city that Ukrainian forces recaptured in recent weeks. Taylor urged the commissioners to continue to examine the growing evidence of Russia's filtration operations, forced deportations and disappearances. She referred to numerous sources that indicated Russian authorities have interrogated, detained and/or forcibly deported between 900,000 and 1.6 million Ukrainian citizens, and reports that children were being deported from Ukraine and placed in Russian orphanages for adoption. Added German ambassador Katharina Stasch: "Make no mistake, we will hold those who are responsible for these crimes accountable. (AP)

## Booker Prize-winning author Hilary Mantel dies at 70

**LONDON, SEPT 23**/--/Hilary Mantel, the British author of the best-selling Wolf Hall trilogy and the first woman to win the prestigious Booker Prize twice, has died. She was 70, her publisher and agent said on Friday. Mantel, who was regarded as one of the greatest English-language novelists of this century, died "suddenly yet peacefully" on Thursday surrounded by close family and friends, according to her agent. A statement released by publishers HarperCollins said: "We are heartbroken at the death of our beloved author, Dame Hilary Mantel and our thoughts are with her friends and family, especially her husband, Gerald. This is a devastating loss and we can only be grateful she left us with such a magnificent body of work," it said.

Mantel was one of the greatest English novelists of this century and her beloved works are considered modern classics. She will be greatly missed," her agent wrote in a blog post. Born on July 6, 1952, in Glossop, Derbyshire in England, Mantel received the prestigious Booker Prize twice, for 2009's Wolf Hall, the first in the Thomas Cromwell series, and the 2012 follow-up Bring Up the Bodies, which also won the 2012 Costa Book of the Year. To date, The Wolf Hall trilogy has been translated into 41 languages with sales of over 5 million worldwide. The conclusion to her trilogy, The Mirror and the Light, was published in 2020 to much critical acclaim, became a fiction best-seller and was longlisted for The Booker Prize 2020. Mantel was the first woman to receive the Booker Prize twice. Everyone at the Booker

Prizes is deeply saddened to hear of the death of Hilary Mantel, four-time Booker Prize nominee and winner in 2009 and 2012. We send our sincere condolences to her family, friends and colleagues, The Booker Prizes said in a tweet.

Ben Hamilton, who was Mantel's agent throughout her career, said it had been the greatest privilege to work with the writer. Her wit, stylistic daring, creative ambition and phenomenal historical insight mark her out as one of the greatest novelists of our time, Hamilton said.

She will be remembered for her enormous generosity to other budding writers, her capacity to electrify a live audience, and the huge array of her journalism and criticism, producing some of the finest commentary on issues and books. We will miss her immeasurably, but as a shining light for writers and readers she leaves an extraordinary legacy, Hamilton said.

Nicholas Pearson, former Publishing Director of 4th Estate and Hilary's long-term editor said the news of Hilary's death was devastating to her friends and everyone who worked with her. Hilary had a unique outlook on the world she picked it apart and revealed how it works in both her contemporary and historical

novels every book an unforgettable weave of luminous sentences, unforgettable characters and remarkable insight. She seemed to know everything. For a long time, she was critically admired, but The Wolf Hall Trilogy found her the vast readership she long deserved, Pearson said.

CEO HarperCollins Charlie Redmayne said Mantel was a



"writer to the core" who had "huge empathy for her subjects". "A writer to the core, Hilary was one of the greatest of her generation a serious, fearless novelist with huge empathy for her subjects. Who else could have brought Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII and the huge cast of The Wolf Hall Trilogy to life with such insight, frailty and humanity but her?"

"We will all miss Hilary's company, her wisdom, her humour, and treasure her incredible literary legacy she will be read as long as people are still reading," Redmayne said.

In an interview with the Financial Times newspaper on September 10, Mantel talked about her perennial health conditions and said that her "health is unpredictable". "When I was small, an unkind doctor called me 'Little Miss Neverwell'. Now I'm Great Dame Neverwell. My health is unpredictable and a daily source of tension. But I am always looking

for improvement," she was quoted as saying by the British daily. Since she was in her early 20s, Mantel suffered from debilitating health conditions. She was later diagnosed with endometriosis, a disease of the female reproductive system, due to which she had to undergo surgical menopause at the age of 27, leaving her unable to bear children. The writer said that extreme caution in small things and taking big risks in matters of importance defined her life. "In small things, extreme caution: 'Take your raincoat. In fact, why not take two?' But for a new country or a project, I've been ready to jump. In big decisions, you seldom have all the information you need. If you hesitate and rationalise for too long, your courage slips away," she said in the interview.

Mantel also touched upon the topic of the afterlife as she responded to a question about whether she believed in the idea or not. "Yes. I can't imagine how it might work. However, the universe is not limited by what I can imagine," she had said.

The 4th Estate Books, an imprint of HarperCollins UK, published her latest book, "The Wolf Hall Picture Book" which was released in the UK on September 15. Mantel was born in Glossop, Derbyshire, England on 6 July 1952. She studied Law at the London School of Economics and Sheffield University. She was employed as a social worker, and lived in Botswana for five years, followed by four years in Saudi Arabia, before returning to Britain in the mid-1980s. Mantel married geologist Gerald McEwen on September 23, 1972. (PTI)





that ended this month. The United States and Canada currently bar entry to foreign citizens who have not received COVID-19 vaccines, and so he also missed four other events in North America in 2022. Djokovic was able to get into France, losing to Rafael Nadal in the quarterfinals at the French Open in June, and England, winning the title at Wimbledon in July. The Laver Cup, which begins Friday, is Djokovic's first competition since Wimbledon. "I don't have any regrets. I mean, I do feel sad that I wasn't able to play (at the US Open), but that was a decision that I made and I knew what the consequences would be," he said on Thursday. "So I accepted them and that's it." Djokovic has spent more weeks at No. 1 in the ATP rankings than anyone else, breaking Roger Federer's record, and is No. 7 this week, in part because of a lack of activity and in part because there were no ranking points awarded to anyone at Wimbledon this year. "I'm not used to making, obviously in the last 15-20 years, longer breaks between the tournaments, but it is what it is," Djokovic said. "That's kind of the situation I was in. I'm just excited to be able to play here now and most of the other indoor (tournaments) for the rest of the season. (AP)



with common washrooms to business class travels and stay at swanky five-stars with proper central contracts and financial security. In between, a lot of water has flown through both Hooghly and Thames as she went on her journey undeterred. The delivery to Meg Lanning in the semi-final of the 2017 World Cup will be one such piece of cricketing action that you would want. As India aim for a 3-0 clean sweep after a couple of dominant shows, one can assure that there will be no let up in her intensity. There won't be another Jhulan Goswami. (PTI)

**Teams (from):**  
India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Sabbineni Meghana, Deepti Sharma, Yastika Bhatia (wk), Pooja Vastrakar, Sneh Rana, Renuka Thakur, Meghna Singh, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Harleen Deol, Dayalan Hemalatha, Simran Dil Bahadur, Jhulan Goswami, Taniyaa Bhatia and Jemimah Rodrigues.

**England:** Amy Jones (c and wk), Tammy Beaumont, Lauren Bell, Maia Bouchier, Alice Capsey, Kate Cross, Freya Davies, Alice Davidson-Richards, Charlie Dean, Sophie Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Freya Kemp, Issy Wong and Danni Wyatt.

**MATCH STARTS AT 3.30PM IST.**

**LOS ANGELES, SEPT 23** --/ / Pete Sampras, the 14-time Grand Slam champion whose Wimbledon reign was ended by Roger Federer in 2001, paid tribute to the Swiss great in a social media video on Thursday. Federer, winner of 20 Grand Slam titles and one of the best players in history, is making a farewell appearance at the Laver Cup in London on Friday before he heads into retirement. Sampras took the occasion to recall their only meeting — when 19-year-old Federer beat him in the fourth round at the All England Club. “Not really sure where to begin, so I’ll just start from the very beginning,” Sampras said in a video directed straight to Federer. “When I first played you, you were 19 years old, an up-and-coming player and people were talking about you. “And we had a great battle on the Centre Court of Wimbledon. And you took me down. “Tough five-setter,” recalled Sampras, who had won the previous four Wimbledon titles to take his tally to seven. “And I just remember walking off the court, feeling like I met my match.” Sampras would win one more Grand Slam title, at the US Open in 2002, before retiring. Over the next two decades he watched Federer’s career blossom. (AFP)

**LONDON, SEPT 23 /--/** Jhulan Goswami, a name synonymous with 'fast bowling' in women's cricket, will walk into her cricketing sunset at the Lord's on Saturday and the Indian team will strive to make it a memorable swansong for her by completing a historic ODI series clean sweep on English soil, here.

Playing one game at Lord's is an ultimate dream for a cricketer. Scoring a hundred or taking a five-for is a different high but bidding adieu to the game following an illustrious career at the 'Mecca of Cricket' is only reserved for a few chosen ones. Sunil Gavaskar (although he played his last first-class game there) didn't get that opportunity. Neither did a Sachin Tendulkar or a Brian Lara or a Glenn McGrath got that opportunity to step down the stairs of the hallowed Long Room on their final playing day. Even Goswami's colleague for nearly 20 years, Mithali Raj, couldn't retire from a cricket field. But call it destiny or design, Goswami's last hurrah is happening at Lord's. There couldn't have been a more iconic setting as the strapping 5 feet 11 inch lady walks her way through that Long Room where the MCC's 'suits' will stand up and her teammates will give her a 'Guard of Honour' when she will enter the ground.

A series already won with an unassailable 2-0 lead, Harmanpreet