

DECCAN CHRONICLE

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

RAJAHMUNDRY | TUESDAY | 1 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 34.0°C
Min: 25.0°C
RH: 71%
Rainfall: 1.3mm
Forecast: Humid and Overcast. Max/Min temp. 34/25 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES (+70,417)	DEATHS (+880)
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36,84,339 65,427
covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,873)	(+9)
TS: 1,24,963	827
(+10,004)	(+85)
AP: 4,34,771	3,969

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,55,12,793
DEATHS 8,52,488
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES worldometers.info/ coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrapada Shuddha Chaturdasi till 9.40 am
Star: Danishta till 4.39 pm
Varjyam: 12.26 am to 2.10 am
Durmuhurtham: 8.33 am to 9.23 am; 11.06 pm to 11.53 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Muhamarr 12, 1442 AH
PRAYERS (ROYAL MOSQUE)
Fajr: 5.00 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 5.00 pm
Magrib: 6.35 pm
Isha: 8.30 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.16 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.49 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 5.43 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 5.58 PM

COUNTER POINT



IN BRIEF

PVT HOSPITALS

CHARGE ₹4L PER BED IN EG

SAMPAT G.

SAMRITAN | DC

VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 31

Given steep rise in Covid-19 cases and the resultant non-availability of beds, some private hospitals are charging ₹4 lakh to ₹5 lakh per bed in East Godavari.

The district is having five government hospitals and 23 private hospitals to provide treatment to the Covid-19 infected patients with a bed strength of 4,129. A call to any of these hospitals will come up with a reply that no bed is available.

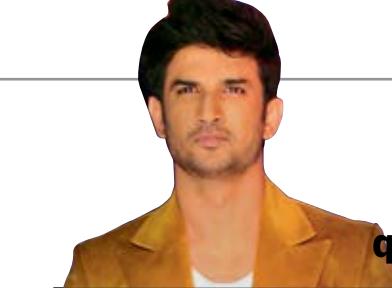
■ Full report on Page 3

Aurobindo eyes pie in AP pharma city

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 31

Aurobindo Pharma is said to be aggressively pushing to becoming the private partner of the proposed greenfield bulk drug park of the Andhra Pradesh government in East Godavari district.

The Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation's wholly-owned Andhra Pradesh Bulk Drug Infrastructure Corporation will have 51 per cent stake in the proposed park and the



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Sushant case: ED questions Goa hotelier



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NRI Pritam Singh is Singapore's opp leader



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CSK may part ways with Raina

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Vol. 25 No. 126 Established 1940 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

GDP shrinks by record 23.9%

Indian economy fares worst in world during April-June; ₹8.5 lakh crore worth business lost

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

India's economy saw its steepest fall in GDP growth in April-June 2020, the first quarter of this fiscal, as it contracted by 23.9 per cent — negative growth for the first time — as coronavirus-related lockdowns weighed on the already-declining consumer demand and investment.

This is the sharpest contraction since Independence of the country and contrasts with 3.1 per cent growth in January-March quarter and 5.2 per cent expansion in the same period last year, official data released Monday showed.

The data showed that GDP at constant (2011-12) prices in Q1 of 2020-21 was estimated at ₹26.90 lakh crores, against ₹35.35 lakh crores in Q1 of 2019-20, showing a contraction of 23.9 per cent. India's economic activities were crippled after the nationwide lockdown imposed in March to tackle the spread of Covid-19.

The contraction of 23.9 per cent would mean the loss of nearly ₹8.5 lakh crore worth business during the April-June period. India's economic contraction is the worst among the G20 countries.

The data shows manufacturing has already entered recession as output fell 39.3 per cent in the June

● ECONOMISTS, however, believe that India's economy may shrink by around 10 per cent in the current fiscal year.

quarter after falling 1.4 per cent in the earlier quarter. The positive news is that the farm sector's annual growth stood at 3.4 per cent in April-June, offering hope that the rural economy can support millions of migrant workers who returned to their villages during the lockdown period. The data further showed that the manufacturing, construction and trade sectors reported massive slumps of 39.3 per cent, 50.3 per cent and 47

per cent respectively.

The BSE Sensex, which made a strong start and touched the 40,000-mark in the morning session, surrendered all gains and plummeted over 1,600 points from the day's high. It finally ended at 38,628.29, down 839.02 points or 2.13

per cent. Icra's principal economist Aditi Nayar said, "As expected, GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and GVA (Gross Value Added) plunged precipitously in the lockdown-ridden quarter of Q1 FY2021, both printing similar to our forecast of a 25 per cent contraction. Moreover, incoming data on the MSME and less formal sectors could manifest in a deeper contraction when revised data is released subsequently."

uncertainty, that will persist till pandemic isn't brought under complete control."

Economists, however, believe that India's economy may shrink by around 10 per cent in the current fiscal year.

Icra's principal economist Aditi Nayar said, "As expected, GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and GVA (Gross Value Added) plunged precipitously in the lockdown-ridden quarter of Q1 FY2021, both printing similar to our forecast of a 25 per cent contraction. Moreover, incoming data on the MSME and less formal sectors could manifest in a deeper contraction when revised data is released subsequently."

Lockdown impact steeper: Experts

Mumbai, Aug. 31: The June quarter GDP contraction at 23.9 per cent shows that the impact of the lockdown has been "way higher than anticipated", analysts at India Ratings and Research said. The situation would have been far worse but for the banking, financial services and IT and IT-enabled services sectors which continued to operate in the lockdown, they added.

Some analysts expect the remaining three quarters in the fiscal to show negative growth as well. The Indian economy was facing challenges even before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The quantum of negative growth shows the

India foils China's attempt to occupy more LAC land

Chinese return after finding Indians at Pangong lake

PAWAN BALI | DC
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

In a major flareup in eastern Ladakh, the Indian Army has thwarted an attempt by Chinese troops to transgress and grab land on the southern banks of Pangong Tso on the night of August 29-30.

This is an attempt by the Chinese to open a new front in Ladakh. Till now the standoff was in the "Finger" area on the northern bank of Pangong Tso but the Chinese PLA are now also looking to infiltrate into the Chushul sector.

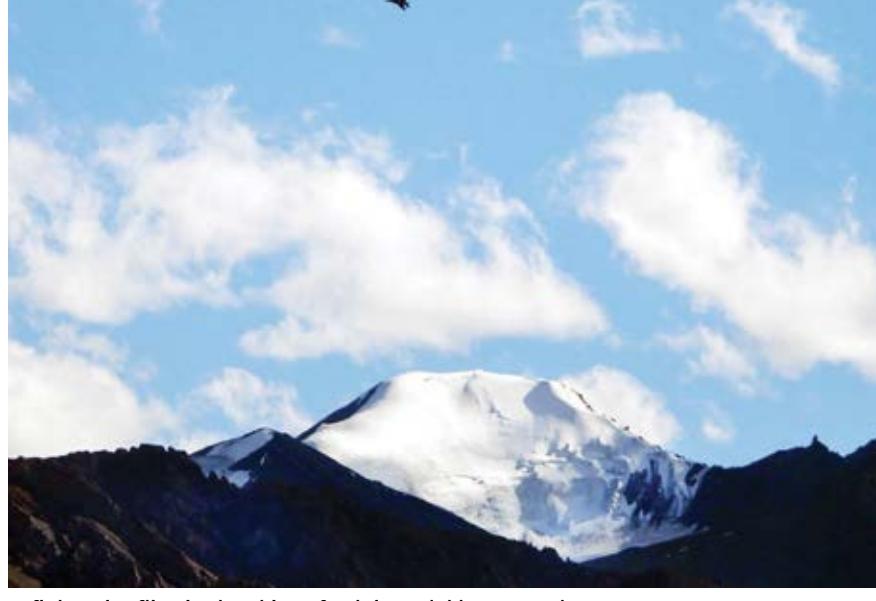
In a "pre-emptive move", the Indian Army has now occupied a few heights in South Pangong Tso to dominate the area, sources said. The Army said in a statement on Monday that PLA troops had carried out "provocative military movements" to "change the status quo" on the night of August 29-30.

"Indian troops pre-empted this PLA activity on the southern bank of Pangong Tso, undertook measures to strengthen our positions and thwart Chinese intentions to unilaterally change the facts on the ground," the Indian Army statement said.

It added that the Indian Army was committed to maintaining peace and tranquility through dialogue, but was equally determined to protect its territorial integrity.

A brigade commander-level flag meeting was held at Chushul to resolve these issues.

Army Spokesperson Col Aman Anand said troops from China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) "violated" the consensus arrived at during military and diplomatic engagements on the ongoing



— PTI

standoff in eastern Ladakh, and carried out provocative military movements to change the status quo.

Initial reports say the Army got information that the Chinese had started building up forces to occupy Indian territory in Pangong Tso's southern banks. The Indian Army physically occupied the area as soon as the PLA tried its transgressions.

There was no physical clash between the troops.

The Indian Army's "pre-emptive" move is days after Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat warned that India has "military options" to deal with Chinese transgressions in Ladakh if talks between the two sides at the military and diplomatic level don't yield any result.

Government sources said the top strategic and military brass including

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat and the three service chiefs were briefed about the Chinese attempt in detail.

The Chinese Army's Western Theatre Command accused India of crossing the LAC on Monday and of purposely launching "provocations".

It said: "China strongly opposes the acts and urges India to immediately withdraw the troops that have illegally crossed the LAC."

In New Delhi, people familiar with the developments said India has taken the Chinese attempt "seriously" and the Army has further increased its deployment of troops and weaponry in and around southern and northern banks of the Pangong Tso

lake following the Chinese attempt. They said the attempt reinforced the assessment by the Army that China has not been serious in disengaging its troops from the friction points as it was still trying to change the status of the LAC in the new area.

The India-China military standoff in Ladakh will complete four months this week. The two armies are involved in a standoff in Pangong Tso, Hot Springs area and the Despang-DBO sector in Ladakh.

A series of military and diplomatic talks between India and China failed to persuade China to disengage its forces.

China has instead used this time only to bring its forces nearer the LAC, position heavy weaponry, build helipads and air defence systems and deploy missiles against India at new positions.

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I propose to submit to the order and respectfully pay the fine. I did not mean to disrespect the court with my tweets. I will pay the fine.

— PRASHANT BHUSHAN
Lawyer

was desirous of giving quietus to this matter. Directly or indirectly, the contemnor was persuaded to end this matter by tendering an apology and save the grace of the institution as well as the individual, who is an officer of the court". "However, for reasons best known to him, he has neither shown regret in spite of our persuasion or the advice of the learned Attorney-General," he added.

Mr Bhushan's conduct, Justice Mishra said, "Reflects adamanee and ego, which has no place in the system of administration of justice and in noble profession, and no remorse is shown for the harm done to the institution to which he belongs."

Referring to Mr Bhushan releasing his second statement to the media even before it reached the court, the court said, "If we do not take cognizance of such conduct, it will give a wrong message to the lawyers and litigants throughout the country." It then ordered the fine.

The SC had on August 14, 2020, held Mr Bhushan guilty of the contempt of court for his two tweets which the court had said lowered its dignity and authority.

ADANI ACQUIRES MUMBAI AIRPORT FROM GVK GROUP

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 31

Gujarat-based Gautam Adani-led Adani Group will take over the operations of Mumbai airport from Hyderabad-based GVK Group, both companies said in two separate announcements on Monday.

Though financial details of the deal were not revealed, the Adani Group would take over the entire 50.5 per cent stake of the GVK Group and 23.5 per cent shareholding of two other foreign minority investors. As part of the deal, the Adani Group would take over the debt of GVK Airport Developers Ltd.

This deal marks the exit of the GVK Group, which operated prestigious Mumbai and Bengaluru airports, from the airport business in India. It had sold its stake in Bengaluru airport's operating firm to Hyderabad-born Indian-Canadian Prem Watsa's Fairfax India Holdings Ltd. The GVK Group now operates only one airport in Bali, Indonesia.

While the GVK Group's conduct, Justice Mishra said, "Reflects adamanee and ego, which has no place in the system of administration of justice and in noble profession, and no remorse is shown for the harm done to the institution to which he belongs."

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The Mumbai airport deal will catapult the Adani Group as the country's largest private airport operator, an objective set by the company a few months back in its annual report for fiscal year 2020.

The Adanis already run six non-metro airports, built by the Airports Authority of India and has added Mumbai airport to its kitty.

Seven-day national mourning declared; funeral will be held today in Delhi

Pranab Mukherjee, man for all seasons, dead

SANJAY BASAK | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

Abhijit and daughter Sharmistha Mukherjee.

Speaking about his long journey, Pranab Mukherjee once said: "I have seen vast, perhaps unbelievable changes during the journey that has brought me from the flicker of a lamp in a small Bengal village to the chandeliers of Delhi."

Pranab Mukherjee's funeral will be held at the Lodhi Road crematorium in New Delhi on Tuesday.

The government announced

colour will be flown at half-mast and there will be no official entertainment.

Mukherjee, who was found to be coronavirus positive, was admitted to the Army R&R Hospital, where he also underwent surgery for a blood clot in the brain.

Mukherjee's condition, however, deteriorated over weeks and he was put on ventilator support.

"With a heavy heart,

IN BRIEF

LAUNCH OF YSR SAMPOORNA POSHANA PUT OFF

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 31

The state government has deferred the launch of nutrition supplementation programme called YSR Sampoorna Poshana scheme scheduled to be held from September 1 to September 7 as the Centre declared seven days of state mourning following the death of former President Pranab Mukherjee.

Information and public relations commissioner T. Vijay Kumar Reddy in a statement issued on Monday stated that though the YSR Sampoorna Poshana scheme was scheduled to be launched by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, it was deferred to September 7.

He said that the scheme was taken up at ₹1,863.11 crore to benefit 30.16 lakh people in 55,607 Anganwadi centres to provide supplementary nutrition.

ATCHANNAIDU DISCHARGED FROM NRI HOSPITAL

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 31

Telugu Desam MLA K. Atchannaidu was discharged from NRI hospital after he tested negative for Covid-19 on Monday.

The AP High Court had granted him bail on ESI scam on August 29. Though ACB had arrested him a few months ago to inquire on his role in the scam, he fell sick and tested Covid-19 positive. He took treatment at the government hospital at Guntur for a health problem and later shifted to Ramesh Hospitals. Since he tested Covid-19 positive, he was shifted to NRI hospital for treatment.

After taking a few days of treatment, he was cured of the infection and discharged from the hospital.

LOKESH: YSRC BEHIND ATTACK ON SCRIBE'S HOUSE

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, AUG. 31

The Telugu Desam (TD) national general secretary Nara Lokesh once again held the ruling party, YSR Congress, responsible for an incident of attack on the house of a journalist, working with a vernacular Telugu newspaper, from Chittoor district.

Reportedly, the house of one Venkata Narayan, a local journalist from Kanuru village in Somala mandal was allegedly vandalised by three men on Sunday. The video in which the three men damaging the scribe's house has gone viral on social media.

This episode took a political turn on Monday when the TD leader Lokesh alleged that the YSRC minister Peddireddy Ramchandra Reddy was behind the attack.

Posting a video on Twitter, Mr Lokesh alleged that the ruling party men have tried to burn the house of the scribe while he was trapped inside. The attack was a retaliation for exposing Dalit auto-driver Om Pratap's death and the local sand mafia.

Mr Lokesh tweeted the video and said, "Shocked to see Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy's men attack the house of journalist Venkata Narayana & vandalise his property. The goons threatened to douse the family with petrol & burn them alive. This was in retaliation for exposing Om Pratap's death & YSRC sand mafia".

He also tweeted, "The family locked themselves inside their house in terror, saving themselves from getting lynched. This is one of the many ghastly acts of violence against press freedom, and proof that the ruling party is indulging in organised terror. This is total lawlessness, I strongly condemn these brutal acts of terror and call for the perpetrators to be punished without political interference. Press freedom must be protected at any cost".

Meanwhile, in an official statement, Punganur rural inspector Mr T. Madhusudhan Reddy denied on Monday any political angle behind the attack. "Three members from a family of a minor girl, who allegedly faced harassment by her school headmaster, had attacked the house of the journalist. They did this as he was allegedly trying to mediate and force the girl's family for a settlement," he said and added that a case had been registered and accused G. Bhaskar, K. Hari and Suresh were arrested".

Poor storage capacity of reservoirs affects Seema

Tungabhadra water not used to its maximum due to leakages

NAGABHUSHANAM
HOSKOTE | DC
ANANTAPUR, AUG. 31

The poor storage capacity of reservoirs in Rayalaseema have been unable to make use of sources from the Tungabhadra dam for the past three decades.

Pulivendula, part of HLMC catchment area, has never got minimum water from the Tungabhadra. Kurnool city is also suffering a drinking water crisis every year due to poor storage facilities during peak season. The Penna Abobilam balancing reservoir (PABR), the only major source to preserve water, has been unable to have even half of water due to leakages.

Though, PABR's capacity is 11 TMC ft, it cannot store even 5 TMC ft. In addition, the mid pennar reservoir with 5 TMC ft capacity has to keep about 4 TMC ft.

CPI state secretary K. Ramakrishna, told *Deccan Chronicle* that he wrote a letter to Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, to fight against false reports about the silt level. "Jagan should resist Karnataka's false reports on silt and demand additional water as compensation," Mr Ramakrishna said.

Former minister and Telugu Desam politburo member, Kalava Srinivasulu, recalled that he asked for an additional reservoir near Untakal and funds were released for DPR preparation for a 5 TMC ft reservoir. Its construction is still moving at a snail's pace, said Mr Ramakrishna.

Tungabhadra high level main canal (HLMC) superintending engineer Nayakanti Rajasekhar, said the irrigation department submitted a preliminary report for the Tungabhadra board for a parallel flood canal towards AP. The department assessed that at least ₹540 crore would be needed. "We will prepare a detailed project report soon after board meeting. We also demand the pending survey report 2016 on silt," Mr Rajasekhar told this newspaper.

AP gets its share from the Tungabhadra towards the HLMC and low level canal (LLC), along with power generation. The HLMC canal is unable to draw maximum water even if the Tungabhadra board authorities are ready to release more water during rainy season.

Tungabhadra board secretary, Naga Mohan, said

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, AUG. 31

The drawing capacity of water channels from Srisailam to Kandaleru are being increased to divert floodwaters to Somasila and Kandaleru dams at an estimated cost of ₹955 crore to ensure supply of drinking water to Chennai, apart from meeting the other requirements.

Enhancing the capacity of canals became a necessity for effective utilisation of floodwaters, as they are available only for 30 to 45 days as against 120 days in the past thanks to dams built upstream by both Maharashtra and Karnataka.

According to the chief engineer of the NTR Telugu Ganga project, K. Harinarayana Reddy, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh should provide 5 tmc ft of water each to Chennai following the agreement of the Telugu Ganga project.

After bifurcation, Telangana state had to deliver 40 per cent of the 5 tmc ft of water and the balance should be borne by AP.

However, Maharashtra

enhancing the capacity of canals became a necessity for effective utilisation of floodwaters, as they are available only for 30 to 45 days as against 120 days in the past thanks to dams built upstream by both Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Andhra and Karnataka have been maintaining that their share should be considered from the floodwaters.

AP is not accepting this while stressing that they are also not storing floodwater and releasing it downstream.

AP engineers have been requesting the two states to release the water as and when water is supplied to Chennai from Kandaleru, while referring to the need to maintain minimum water levels at Veligodu, Somasila and Kandaleru dams. For instance, 854 feet level at Srisailam is necessary to release water to TGP.

Thereafter they have to maintain a minimum of 16 tmc ft of water at Veligodu project, 30 tmc ft of water at Somasila and

that the board acts neutrally to assist all three states in sharing water from the reservoir. He further said that the board

was to ready release maximum water based on available capacity. The board would call for a meeting in September.

10 tmc ft of water at Kandaleru to supply water from one point to another to ensure water to Chennai from Kandaleru.

Mr Reddy said they wrote to KRBMB (Krishna River Management Board) to sort out the issue. "Water realisation at the Chennai end is only 60 to 70 per cent because the Telugu Ganga canal discharge capacity from 78 km to 151 km in the Tamil Nadu side is only 1000 cusecs as against 4000 cusecs from Kandaleru to 78 km. Moreover, we should release the water when there is no demand for irrigation to avoid misuse. We told TN engineers to enhance the canal capacity to 2000 cusecs from 78 km to increase the realisation."

Referring to a recent meeting with the higher authorities of Tamil Nadu, he said they reacted positively to provide funds in advance for the widening of canals from Srisailam to Kandaleru in accordance with the existing agreement where Tamil Nadu should share 30 per cent of any expenditure pertaining to the Telugu Ganga project.

On Wednesday morning, he reaches YSR ghat, Idupulapaya by 9.45 am. From 9.50 am to 10.30 am, he will pay tributes to his father at YSR ghat on Wednesday morning with family members.

He reaches Kadapa airport 4.45 pm on Tuesday and departs for Idupulapaya by special helicopter and will stay there.

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TS to give stiff competition to AP in race for bulk drug park

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 31

Telangana state will give stiff competition to Andhra Pradesh in the race for the bulk drug park. The Centre will evaluate the proposals of the competing states and decide on rankings.

Hyderabad has the traditional advantage of being the bulk drug capital of the country and the TS government has already acquired about 8,000 acres for Hyderabad Pharma City (HPC) and set into motion the acquisition of another 7,000 acres.

K. Rama Rao, TS industries minister, has been promoting HPC as the world's largest pharmaceutical cluster that would finally come up in 19,000 acres and would be an ideal international destination for global pharma players opting out of China. Besides, it will also accommodate the existing and new domestic players.

Another advantage of the TS model is that the government, apart from arranging land, will bear the expenditure for basic infrastructure like roads, drainage and power while the private player has to invest in the common effluent treatment plant and other capital intensive facilities mandated

JAGAN TO REACH KADAPA BY TODAY EVENING

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, AUG. 31

Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, is coming to Kadapa on Tuesday evening and will stay at Idupulapaya. He will pay tributes to his father at YSR ghat on Wednesday morning with family members.

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CPM DEMANDS ACTION ON CHENNUR SUGARS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, AUG. 31

CPM state committee member Narayana, demanded that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, who is coming to Kadapa on Tuesday, make a clear statement on the Chenur co-operative sugar factory.

At a press conference at the CPM district office on Monday, Mr Narayana pointed out that the factory had been closed for the past eight years. Nearly 50 workers had no salaries and they are in hardship and some have died, he said. Jagan Mohan Reddy had assured the farmers during his padyatra that he would open the factory and support the farmers and workers.

He said he, along with five members of his family, purchased it from one Kandrapu Konadu. On October 31, 2002, local talsildar with the help of armed police personnel cleared all the encroachments.

It has been a year now but no progress has been made so far, Mr Narayana said.

People are queuing up to the police to get back their lands, which were in the hands of land sharks for years. They are also seeking police protection after the land prices shot up after the capital was announced.

PRS Naidu, a farmer, owning land in Duppaturu, Bhogapuram villages under Achyutapuram mandal in Visakhapatnam district told the reporters in a press conference on Monday that he owned 32 acres of land.

He said he, along with

five members of his family,

purchased it from one

Kandrapu Konadu. On

October 31, 2002, local talsildar with the help of

armed police personnel

cleared all the encroach-

ments and handed over

the property.

However, in December

2003, around 80 people

claiming ownership of

the land descended on

the property and destroyed

the entire property, including a JCB after attacking and injuring the watchman.

A case was filed, and all the attackers were arrested.

The opposition party went to court several times, and all the time, the court gave orders in our favour. After losing cases, they began threatening to kill us," Mr Naidu told the reporters.

He said that having full

faith in the police under

the new government, Mr Naidu said he lodged a complaint with the super-

intendent of police last

week seeking protection.

Aurobindo in talks with GMR Group for land bank

From Page 1

scheme and offered a grant of about ₹1,000 crore for developing infrastructure.

Sources said various options are being worked out between the two groups including the GMR leasing out 2,000 acres to a special purpose vehicle (SPV) through Aurobindo or the latter purchasing land outright and offering it to the SPV as its equity.

"Offering 2,000 acres of land parcel free from encumbrances is a challenge and Aurobindo alone might be in a position to do that," sources pointed out. The state government also decided to engage the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology as knowledge partner.

for maintaining a clean environment like heating and cooling.

The HPC is ready with the master plan according to which 3,394 acres would be allotted to the red category industries, 1,615 acres to the hybrid category, 2,797 acres for orange and 558 acres for green and white categories. It proposed to set up a pharma university of interna-

tional standards. It will gear up to treat 120 million litres per day of effluents and manage waste of 164 tonnes per day.

Andhra Pradesh on the other hand has just begun the race and set up the AP Bulk Drug Infrastructure Corporation and is in search of a private partner who in all probability will be Aurobindo Pharma.

HC final hearing on constitution of SIT, Cabinet sub-panel

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 31

The Andhra Pradesh High Court scheduled the final hearing on the state government appointing a cabinet subcommittee to investigate lapses in the previous Telugu Desam regime dealing with land acquisition for developing the capital city Amaravati and also a special investigation team to probe such lapses, on Tuesday.

TD politburo member Varla Ramaiah, and former minister Alapati Rajendra Prasad had filed two writ petitions separately in the High Court challenging the two GOs.

High Court judge Justice T. Rajani held virtual hearing on Monday. Ramaiah's senior counsel, V. Venataramana, argued that the present government did not have the authority to review, can-

Farmer seeks police help to save his land

KMP PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 31

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SHORT TAKES

GANESH IDOLS
IMMERSION
COMPLETEDDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, AUG. 31

The immersion of Ganesh idols programme was completed on Monday in different places in East and West Godavari districts without any processions. There was no festive look and enthusiasm.

However, the devotees immersed their idols with great devotion. Previously, the immersion programme took place for two to three days. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the officials did not allow the pandal organisers to install big idols and set up pandals. The organisers also cooperated with the officials. Only near the temples, smaller idols were installed.

In Kakinada, the officials did not allow the immersion of Ganesh idols in Vinayaka Sagar, the site at the salt creek between the two bridges at Jagannackpuri. They allotted a jetty near the One Town police station. However, the people have immersed the idols in different places like Indrapalem, Kalingam Revu, Yetimoga, Mollarammagudi Revu and the sea area near Suryarao beach.

Expressing concern over the officials' attitude on not allowing the immersion programme at Vinayaka Sagar, the Nagar Ganesh Utsava Samithi President Duvvuri Subrahmanyam and honorary president Dusarlapudi Ramana Raju immersed the Ganesh idols in Vinayaka Sagar.

VSU TO HOLD UG
AND PG EXAMS
FROM SEPT. 14DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, AUG. 31

Vikrama Simhapuri University (VSU) will hold final semester exams for undergraduate courses from September 16 and postgraduate courses from September 14 by duly following the Covid-19 safety precautions. Exams will be conducted at VSU College, VSU Campus and PG Centre in Kavali.

Students who are not able to attend the exams because of infection will be allowed to attend the exams later. The VSU authorities said that they would follow the UGC guidelines released on July 6 and also follow the recent verdict of Apex Court. For further details, students may check the university website www.simhapuriuni.ac.in, according to a press release.

TWO NEW LIFTS
OPENED TO PUBLIC
AT RAIL STATIONSDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, AUG. 31

Giving a boost to the passenger amenities, South Central Railway Vijayawada Division has dedicated two new lifts, one each in Ongole and Gudur Railway Station on Monday, August 31.

These lifts will help rail passengers, especially specially-abled people, senior citizens and pregnant women to reach their boarding points with ease.

These two lifts, which have a carrying capacity of 13 passengers, were procured and commissioned at ₹1 crore. At the Ongole station, the new lift is installed on Platform 1 at the Foot Over Bridge near the main entrance.

This lift will connect passengers to the FOB leading to the platforms 2 and 3. All the platforms on Ongole are now directly connected with lift facility, along with escalator service on platform 1 for the convenience of the passengers.

In Gudur, this new lift was installed on recently commissioned new platforms 4 and 5 at the North Foot Over Bridge. The Vijayawada Division has already commissioned seven new lifts against the target of nine lifts for the financial year 2020-21.

Currently, works are in fast progress for commissioning two new lifts in Gudivada by the end of September.

Vijayawada Division has also got approval for procurement and commissioning five new lifts in Bapatla, Annavaram, Kakinada town and Rajahmundry and two new escalators on the proposed Mega FOB at Vijayawada railway stations. With this, Vijayawada Division now has 42 lifts at 14 stations and 18 escalators at seven stations.

P. Srinivas, Divisional Railway Manager, Vijayawada complimented team members.



Private hospitals charge up to ₹5 lakh per bed in Covid cases

Private hospitals accept only cash and no online financial transaction to avoid detection

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 31

bed and this leads managements to charge a whopping four-five lakh rupees for a bed.

Given the steep rise in Covid-19 cases and the resultant non-availability of beds, some private hospitals are charging ₹4 to ₹5 lakh per bed in East Godavari.

The district has five government hospitals and 23 private hospitals to provide treatment to the Covid-19 infected patients with a bed strength of 4,129.

A call to any of these hospitals will come up with a reply that no bed is available to be allotted to an infected patient for admission and to provide treatment. This makes patients plead, especially with the managements of private doctors, to arrange

private hospitals are ignoring them. There is no display of the number of beds available and occupied, though the hospitals are instructed to do so.

Hospitals are also not accepting cashless hospitalisation offered by some health insurance firms while others are not following norms to provide treatment under YSR Aarogyasri scheme.

Family members of Covid-19 patients allege that private hospitals are entertaining requests for beds only from VIPs and the rich who can pay money for the treatment while those who belong to the middleclass and the poor are being ignored.

They say that the doctors have fixed a package of four-five lakh for each Covid-19 patient to provide

general treatment for four to five days and in case the patient requires oxygen and ventilator, they will charge more.

East Godavari collector, D. Muralidhar Reddy, said, "We have been instructing private hospitals to provide treatment to Covid-19 patients following government fixed rates and also under YSR Aarogyasri scheme and in case any hospital flouts such norms and charges more, we will cancel permission to treat Covid-19 patients immediately and initiate necessary action."

Though the state health authorities have been maintaining that they are keeping track of number of beds available and occupied in all the hospitals in the state and posting such data online on their website, the data is found to be old, with no regular updates.

TEACHERS TOLD TO UPDATE THEIR SKILLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, AUG. 31

The ITDA project officer C.V. Adithya Praveen urged the teachers to update their skills as per changing technology, and that it would help the students.

He convened a meeting with education department officials at ITDA meeting hall at Rampachodavaram on Monday.

He said that the education department officials and teachers should pay attention to activity-based teaching and learning. Bala Mitra, organising of Subject Melas, training classes, yoga training, sports meet, Minimum Numerical skills, teaching analysis and others.

He said that in this digital era, the teachers should acquire knowledge on the technology to teach the students, and that good teaching should be given to the students.

State-of-art technology for new Parakamani building

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, AUG. 31

The entire building as well the machinery should be designed using the state-of-art technology for the upcoming Parakamani building in Tirumala, said the TTD EO Mr Anil Kumar Singhal.

The TTD EO along with Additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy on Monday reviewed the works of the new Parakamani Building, which is in the offing in Tirumala, at a meeting held at the TTD administrative building in Tirupati on Monday.

TTD's chief engineer M. Ramesh Reddy presented the layout design of the building coming

up in front of the Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba Anna prasadam complex at Tirumala in an area of 22,622 sq ft on a donation basis at ₹9 crore. He said that the cellar has strong rooms meant for banks while the ground floor has coins parakamani hall and strong rooms for keeping hundi and the first floor houses a hall for currency parakamani, gold and other offerings.

The EO directed the officials concerned to present a perfect plan overcoming the existing glitches of sorting, segregation, counting and security frisking. "The new building should be constructed with state-of-art technology and

machinery, and the process of parakamani should be carried with less workforce involvement to have a more transparent and speedy counting mechanism.

He also discussed the electrical wiring, fire-fighting measure setup, installation of surveillance through CCTV cameras, soundproof glass for coin counting machinery, compound wall with protective spikes, donor Hall, security Room etc. and instructed to take up the works at a faster pace.

Meanwhile, the three-day Pavitrotsavam festival commenced at the Sri Padmavathi Ammavari Temple in Tiruchanoor on Monday in Ekantham.

TIRUPATI COVID-19 CENTRES ADD AYUSH ELEMENTS TO TREATMENT

AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, AUG. 31

State-run hospitals in Tirupati have added traditional elements in treatment of Coronavirus patients, while continuing their allopathic regimen. Notably, herbal tea Kabasura Kudineer and turmeric milk, which are rich in medicinal properties and boost immunity, are being supplied to patients in government Covid care centres. In addition, patients at the Padmavati Nilayam centre in Tirupati are also doing yoga to increase their immunity.

As per recommendations of the central Ayush ministry, along with allo-

pathic treatment, Covid-19 patients admitted in various Covid care centres of Tirupati are being served 40 ml of herbal tea twice a day, 60-80 ml of Kabasura Kudineer and turmeric milk once in a day to enhance their immunity. Yoga classes have also been introduced under sunlight, which is the most natural form of receiving the required daily dose of vitamin D.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Padmavathi Nilayam in-charge S. Lakshmi said these traditional medicines are contributing substantially towards boosting the immunity of patients.

Experts say the recovery rate of Covid-19 does improve if yoga classes are included.

SI SUSPENDED FOR INACTION

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, AUG. 31

Prakasam District SP Siddharth Kaushal has suspended SHO of Dornala town S.K. Abdul Rehman as per the orders of Guntur Range IG J. Prabhakar Rao on the grounds of corruption allegations and inappropriate behaviour with the public.

The SP brought the SHO of Komorolu police station S. Mallikarjuna Rao and Gudluru police station SHO Y. Panduranga Rao to VR at the headquarters.

Farmer cultivates dragon fruit in Kadapa district

NAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDIA | DC
KADAPA, AUG. 31

A farmer from Kadapa district has for the first time started cultivating dragon fruit over an acre of land on an experimental basis at Adavi Cherlopalli village in Veerapunayunipalle mandal of Kadapa district. He showed some of the fruits he had harvested from his farm to ministers Amjad Basha and Suresh in addition to collector Harikiran on occasion of the Independence Day.

Mooli Gangireddy, a young man from Adavi Cherlopalli came across dragon fruit for the first time when he went to be with his younger brother working as a software engineer in Hyderabad and admitted to a hospi-

tal for fever. At that time, Gangireddy had gone to the market to fetch fruits for his brother and came across dragon fruit. The shop owner told him that the fruit has good nutritional value and provides quick relief to those suffering from fever. He then brought two of these fruits for ₹150 each.

Subsequently, Gangireddy, a graduate who owns 20 acres of land, thought of cultivating these fruits and collected details from Google. He bought 1,760 drought-tolerant varieties of dragon fruit saplings from Karambadi area of Tamil Nadu. He constructed cement pillars on his farm over an acre of land and planted the saplings in December 2019. The total cost came to about ₹4 lakh.

Gangireddy told DC that the plants are currently in flower and budding stage. Normally, the inside of dragon fruits is white. But the variety he has cultivated is completely red. Gangireddy said he has come to know that there is a good demand for this type of fruit in the US.

Currently, the price of dragon fruit in the local market is around ₹150 to ₹200 each. Gangireddy said some of the fruits are taking shape but he has not yet harvested them. He would wait for some more time before selling them in the local market. Once planted, dragon fruit can be harvested three times a year for about 30 years. He said the district horticulture officers have been wholeheartedly helping.

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Tribal people said usually, when flood waters start receding, they reach their villages by boats to check on their household articles and clear mud from their houses and localities. But this time, due to imposition of Section 144 prohibitory orders, they were unable to visit their houses. They have returned only now to find that they have lost most of their belongings.

"During the floods, we had to shift and my mother also became ill. After she

got treated in a hospital, I have sent her to my relative's house. On returning, I have found that my TV has got spoilt, utensils and other belongings have got washed away and the forest products have got damaged," said Manthu Anilkumar of Thoyeervu village in Devipatnam mandal. He said that he has never seen such floods in their village. He felt the rent amount will be adjusted in the Resettlement package.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM) has demanded that the government sanction ₹50,000 for each damaged house and ₹25,000 for other houses in flood-affected villages.

The party's Rajahmundry secretary T. Arunkumar said due to construction of Cofferdams, the tribal people have had a very bad experience and lost everything in the floods. He demanded that government stop Polavaram project works until the rehabilitation works have been completed. He wanted the government to pay ₹15,000 per acre of paddy damaged and extend financial assistance to cultivate their crops again.

Arunkumar said their party will stage an agitation in this regard from September 3.

Even as the people in flood-affected villages are returning to their homes, there is another flood threat as the water levels are rising upstream in Godavari. The officials expect the massive flood discharges in the

coming two days due to heavy rains in the upstream reaches of the Godavari river. Therefore, the authorities auctioned the villages in Polavaram of West Godavari, Devipatnam mandal of East Godavari to be wary and to be ready for evacuation again if the flood rises.

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Struct their rehabilitation colonies before the floods.

P. Krishna Rao, honorary president of Polavaram Project Nirvasithula Parira-kshana Samithi, Devipatnam mandal, said tribal and non-tribal people had urged officials to sanction amounts for them to reside in rented houses in upland areas during the floods. But the officials said the rent amount will be adjusted in the Resettlement package.

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SHORT TAKES
**MAOISTS KILL
 ABDUCTED COP IN
 CHHATTISGARH**

DC CORRESPONDENT
 BHOPAL, AUG. 31

Suspected Maoists killed an assistant sub-inspector who was abducted by them at Mengapat under Kurnool police station in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar district of Bijapur on Sunday evening.

Body of Korsa Naigaya (59), posted in Kurnool police station, was recovered at Ketulnar nearly two km from Mengapat on Monday, a senior Bijapur district police officer said.

The slain cop had taken a fortnight's leave to visit his home in Dantewada in south Bastar and started for Dantewada on his bike on Sunday evening, police said.

He was abducted by Maoists at Mengapat, nearly five km from his place of posting at Kutru.

His abduction came to light when the police found his bike abandoned in Mengapat.

A search operation was launched by security forces to rescue him. His body was recovered at a deserted place in Ketulnar. A Maoist leaflet was found near his body", police said.

In another incident, a Naxal was gunned down in an encounter with security forces under Pushav police station in Dhamtari district in Chhattisgarh on Monday.

The slain has been identified as Ravi, member of Gabra Local Organisation Squad of CPI (Maoist).

**SP STUDENT WING
 MEMBERS
 LATHICHARGED**

Lucknow, Aug. 31: Police on Monday lathicharged and detained Samajwadi Party student wing members protesting near the Raj Bhavan here against conducting the NEET and JEE Main amid the Covid-19 pandemic, police said.

Carrying placards with messages such as India United to postpone JEE and NEET, 'Satyagrah against exams during Covid-19' and 'Stop atrocities against students', the party workers were marching towards the Raj Bhavan when they were stopped by police.

As they insisted to move ahead, police used lathicharge to disperse them, and later detained them, a senior police officer said.

Samajwadi Party national spokesman Rajendra Chowdhury said police lathicharged peaceful protesters.

Other party leaders said holding medical entrance exam NEET and engineering entrance exam JEE Main amid a raging pandemic is not in the interest of students. It should be postponed till situation improves, said one of them.

While engineering entrance exam JEE Main has been planned from September 1-6, the NEET is scheduled to be held on September 13.

Earlier on August 27, Samajwadi Party workers were lathicharged by police when they were marching towards the Raj Bhavan in protest against the Centre's decision to hold these exams.

Party president Akhilesh Yadav had last week written an open letter against holding the two exams.

Pranab wanted 'Red Diary' to be cremated with him

The diary is apparently the 'truthful account of his political journey'

SANJAY BASAK | DC
 NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

A magazine once described him as "The man who knew too much."

Pranab Mukherjee, former President was the "veteran insider" in the corridors of power. The man, who apparently had "the memory of an elephant." Pranab, the treasure trove of political secrets was an avid diary writer as well.

His much talked about 'Red Diary' is apparently the "truthful account of his political journey." It is believed that this diary if ever published could stir the hornet's nest in Indian politics.

In his e-book *'Akothito Pranab'* (Untold Pranab), journalist and author, Goutam Lahiri wrote that Pranab Mukherjee had said, "My Red Diary will never be published. It will be cremated along with my body." There were speculations that he would eventually handover his 'Red Diary' to his daughter Sharmishtha.

Pranab Mukherjee's political journey began in West Bengal in 1969, as the election agent for V.K. Krishna Menon, who was contesting a Lok Sabha by-election as an independent candidate.

In his 50-odd years, he was the ultimate insider. He had a vast network of key political players, cutting across party lines. He was not only close to the CPI(M) leader and the then West Bengal chief minister, Jyoti Basu but had often invited RSS chief, Mohan Bhagwat to Rashtrapati Bhawan during his tenure as the President.

He had powerful allies and equally powerful enemies.

The man, who was virtually "number two" during the rule of Indira Gandhi was expelled from the party by her son, Rajiv Gandhi. Rajiv influenced by Congress leaders, like Arun Nehru, A.B.A. Gani Khan Chowdhury, Balaram Jhakhar among the few not excluded Mukherjee from Union Council of Ministers but later expelled him.

He was told that Pranab nurtured the ambition of being the Prime Minister after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984.

Lahiri in his e-book recounts the details of this "misunderstanding." Lahiri writes, "Rajiv Gandhi (on his way to Delhi from Bengal) sought Pranab's advice on 'who after Indira'".

Mukherjee reminded that when Jawaharlal Nehru died in 1964 and Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1966, the senior-most cabinet minister, Gulzar Lal Nanda was appointed as acting PM.

Pranab Mukherjee was

Mukherjee signed AP Reorganisation Bill

S.A. ISHAQI | DC
 HYDERABAD, AUG. 31

Former President Pranab Mukherjee had signed the AP Reorganisation Bill to form Telangana state, after it was passed by Parliament on February 20, 2014. He had earlier headed the sub-committee on Telangana constituted by the UPA-1 government.

B. Vinod Kumar, former MP and Telangana State Planning Commission vice-chairman, said Mukherjee had complete understanding of Telangana issue. He said Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao had first met Mukherjee prior to the 2004 elections. Rao had gone to meet Congress president Sonia Gandhi for a pre-poll alliance, and she asked Mukherjee to talk to Rao. "After their one to one meeting Mukherjee assured KCR in my presence that he will ensure that Telangana is formed if the UPA comes to power," Vinod Kumar told *Deccan Chronicle* on Tuesday.

"I used to hand over consensus letters collected from various parties and Pranab Mukherjee always appreciated our efforts."

Chief Minister, in his condolence message said,

"the former President used to say that there was justice in the demand for a separate Telangana and he used to offer several useful suggestions."

People teach parties a lesson, Pranab had said

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC
 HYDERABAD, AUG. 31

He said Mukherjee was instrumental in including the Telangana issue in the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA-1 government.

When the TRS decided to leave the UPA-1, it was Mukherjee who tried to stop them as Telangana state would be a reality during the UPA tenure.

When the UPA sub-committee on Telangana, headed by Mukherjee, said that it would be able to finalise its report only after receiving responses from all political parties, Rao started consultations with all other parties, Kumar said.

"I used to hand over consensus letters collected from various parties and Pranab Mukherjee always appreciated our efforts."

Chief Minister, in his condolence message said, "the former President used to say that there was justice in the demand for a separate Telangana and he used to offer several useful suggestions."

'Pranab da taught me all about budgets'

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
 HYDERABAD, AUG. 31

It was some time early in 1999 that I first met Pranab Mukherjee. I had just been posted in New Delhi as *Deccan Chronicle*'s correspondent. Duties included 'covering' the Congress, the primary opposition, while Atal Bihari Vajpayee was Prime Minister.

One day, after the daily media briefing, I wanted to know more about some facts and figures related to the economy and the budget. And the best person to explain was Pranab da.

I had in the past squeezed into his room along with other 'well-established' Delhi journos who knew him for a long time. But this time was different. He did not know me at all, I was still a greenhorn as far as

probably just landed the best teacher as far as reading a government budget and understanding it was concerned.

The next day I showed up at his residence in the morning, around 11 am if I recall correctly and he spent the next two hours explaining how a budget is prepared, how to read and understand the numbers and what each 'head' of the budget meant.

And that was only the first lesson. After that day, I visited him at his house several times to sit with him and learn more about country's economy and budget preparations.

He was a willing teacher and I wish I was a better student. Today, at his passing, I grieve the loss of one of the best teachers I ever had.

SSR case: ED grills Goa hotelier

DC CORRESPONDENT
 MUMBAI, AUG. 31

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday grilled Goa hotelier Gaurav Arya in connection with actor Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide and possible laundering of his money as per allegations of his father.

Arya's name cropped up after some text messages on narcotics substances were allegedly shared between Rhea Chakraborty, the main accused in the case, and him.

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) is also like-

Pranab's career defined by Gandhis

From Page 1

MUKHERJEE HIT THE HEADLINES IN 2018 WHEN HE ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO BE CHIEF GUEST AT AN RSS FUNCTION.

Mukherjee did not let that influence his work and in 2004-2014 he was heading most of the groups of ministers.

Speaking at the launch of Mukherjee's book *'The Coalition Years'*, Dr Singh said: "He (Pranab) had reason to feel upset but he respected me and we have a great relationship which will continue till we live." There were rumours that it was Rahul Gandhi who took the final call.

The Gandhi family also seemed reluctant at first about nominating him for President. Some say the Gandhi family (post-Indira) "could never fully trust Pranab da".

After the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, he fell from favour as then PM Rajiv Gandhi and his coterie felt Mukherjee, as the seniormost Cabinet minister, saw himself as the rightful heir to the throne. Rajiv not only dropped Mukherjee from the Cabinet but also expelled him from the party. In his memoir *'The Turbulent Years: 1986-96'*, Mukherjee wrote that he was "shellshocked and flabbergasted".

Mukherjee formed his own political party — Rashtriya Samajwadi Congress — in 1986. In 1989, Mukherjee was recalled and he merged his outfit with the Congress. Rajiv Gandhi later said many things told to him about Mukherjee were "untrue". In Mukherjee's words — "to return to the question of why he (Rajiv) dropped me from the Cabinet and expelled me from the party, all I can say is that he made mistakes, and so did I. He let others influence him and listed to their calumnies against me. I let my frustration overtake my patience."

After Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, Mukherjee returned to the government as external affairs minister under P.V. Narasimha Rao, while then RBI governor Manmohan Singh became finance minister.

Once again he missed the coveted throne when Sonia Gandhi chose Dr Singh to lead the UPA. Even if he was "upset",

Meanwhile, the CBI again summoned Chakraborty on Monday for questioning at their DRDO guest house in Santacruz. Chakraborty and her brother Showik, Rajput's cook Neeraj Singh were questioned on Monday. They may be summoned again as the probe progresses," said an officer privy to the investigation.

On Sunday, Rhea was questioned for around nine hours. She along with some other accused in the case have been grilled by the ED on multiple occasions before the CBI took over the probe.

It is double whammy for guest workers, entrepreneurs in Odisha

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
 BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 31

The Covid-19 crisis had hit them hard. But their spirit always remained high and they had refused to surrender to economic challenges posed by the pandemic. However, the floods in the major river systems of Odisha have convincingly vanquished them.

So much so that many of them are staring at dark days ahead if the state government does not take care of them.

First-time rural entrepreneurs and guest workers who had undertaken agriculture activities in the coastal areas of Odisha have lost all their investments as the high floods in the major river system washed away their dream projects.

"I had invested nearly ₹5 lakh on raising a poultry farm. The birds had grown fully and I was about to sell them in the next few days. I was expecting a return of

major rivers in Odisha, including Mahanadi, Brahmani, Baitarani, Birupa, Luna and Chitratopala were flowing above their danger marks by the evening on Monday.

"I was working as a mechanic in a textile unit in Bangalore. After I returned, I had opened a furniture fabrication unit with a savings of ₹2 lakh rupee. My unit was washed away in the Mahanadi flood," said Tapan Kumar Swain of Banki in Cuttack district.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has assured all the affected entrepreneurs a compensation after the flood damage assessment exercise is completed by the district authorities.

He had undertaken brinjal and other vegetable cultivation in his two hectares of land after borrowing some money from the bank.

"I had grown various veg-

etables on two acres of land on the bank of Brahmani river. The swirling water of Brahmani has destroyed it all. There is no trace even of the roots of the vegetable plants," said Rout.

A few other guest workers who had opened carpentry, pottery and iron furniture fabrication units also narrated similar harrowing stories.

"I was working as a mechanic in a textile unit in Bangalore. After I returned, I had opened a furniture fabrication unit with a savings of ₹2 lakh rupee. My unit was washed away in the Mahanadi flood," said Tapan Kumar Swain of Banki in Cuttack district.

After the review meeting, the Chief Minister announced that all people hit by the floods will be provided with cooked food / dry food as long as they are in shelter. He also announced 50 kilograms of rice and ₹500 as immediate support to the families of the severely affected / submerged villages.

"One polythene sheet will be provided to each eligible family whose house has been demolished," he said.

Luna and Chitratopala were flowing above their danger marks by the evening on Monday. Floods in the Mahanadi, Brahmani, Baitarani, Budhabalanga, Kharasrota and Subarnarekha in Odisha have ravaged almost all the coastal districts.

The Chief Minister on Monday afternoon undertook an aerial visit of the affected areas and later reviewed the responses of various departments to mitigate the plights of the people.

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"One polythene sheet will be provided to each eligible family whose house has been demolished," he said.

Chief inspection



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inspects a flood-affected area with Army jawans near Hoshangabad district on Monday. He assured farmers that all possible measures will be taken to compensate for their losses. "Farmers should not get worried about the losses. The government is in action and all possible measures will be taken to compensate them through crop insurance scheme and RBC (revenue book code) provisions," he said.

IN BRIEF

Nod to Amazon drone delivery

San Francisco: Amazon on Monday said a freshly-issued Federal Aviation Administration certificate has cleared the launch pad for drone deliveries in the US. "This certification is an important step forward for Prime Air and indicates the FAA's confidence in Amazon's operating and safety procedures for an autonomous drone delivery service that will one day deliver packages to our customers," Amazon VP David Carbon said. "We will continue to develop and refine our technology to fully integrate delivery drones into the air-space," he said. — AFP

Chinese-born Oz journalist held

Sydney: A Chinese-born Australian journalist for CCTV-News, the English-language channel of China Central Television, has been detained in China, Australia's government said Monday. Australian officials had a consular visit with Cheng Lei at a detention facility via video link on

Thursday, foreign minister Marise Payne said in a statement. They will continue to provide assistance and support to her and her family. Australia had been informed by Chinese authorities of her detention, but made its first public announcement on Monday. — Agencies

2 detained over Ryanair security

London: British counter-terrorism police were holding two men on Monday following a "security threat" aboard a Ryanair flight that led to fighter jets being scrambled to intercept it. Police said they a 34-year-old man from Kuwait and a 48-year-old man from Italy under terrorism laws late on Sunday at Stansted Airport after the flight from Vienna landed. Britain's Royal Air Force said it had launched two Typhoon fighter jets from a base in nearby Lincolnshire "to intercept a civilian aircraft". "The aircraft was escorted safely to Stansted," it added. — AP

2 die in UAE restaurant blast

Abu Dhabi: A powerful blast ripped through a restaurant in the UAE's capital here on Monday, killing two persons, police said. A number of people were injured in the explosion which took place at the fast food restaurant in a building on Rashid Bin Saeed Street, according to a newspaper report. According to on-site investigations, the incident was caused by a misalignment in the gas container fittings following refuelling, the Abu Dhabi Media Office said. Emergency response teams evacuated residents of the building and cordoned off the area. — P71

SUDAN, REBELS STRIKE DEAL TO END ROW

Juba, Aug. 31: Sudanese leaders and rebel commanders agreed Monday on a historic peace deal, a crucial step towards ending 17 years of conflict in which hundreds of thousands of people were killed.

Leaders of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), an umbrella organisation of rebel groups from the western region of Darfur and the southern states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, raised their fists in celebration after inking the agreement.

Fighting in Darfur alone left around three lakh people dead after rebels took up arms there in 2003, according to the United Nations, with former government leaders accused of carrying out genocide and of crimes against humanity.

Conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile erupted in 2011, in the wake of South Sudan's independence, resuming two decades of war.

"I congratulate all in Sudan on reaching a historic comprehensive peace that addressed the roots of the problem and ended the war, God willing," said Gibril Ibrahim, commander of one of rebel groups, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

He paid tribute to all those killed or affected by the long years of war.

Sudanese paramilitary commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo — best known by his nickname "Hemeti", and who commanded fighters in the war — signed the deal on behalf of Khartoum. — AFP

Israeli flight in UAE

US National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien speaks next to US Presidential Adviser Jared Kushner (centre) and Head of Israel's National Security Council Meir Ben-Shabbat (left) in front of an airplane of El Al at the tarmac of Abu Dhabi airport, following the arrival of the first-ever commercial flight from Israel to the UAE, on Monday. The US-Israeli delegation took off on a historic first direct commercial flight from Tel Aviv to Abu Dhabi to mark the normalisation of ties between the Jewish state and the UAE. — AFP

Trump seizes on protests, Dems slam him for tension**Aides want Don to give aggressive message on law, order**

Washington, Aug. 31:

Democrats accused President Donald Trump of trying to inflame racial tensions and incite violence to benefit his campaign after he praised supporters who clashed with protesters during a deadly night in Portland, Oregon, and announced he will travel to Kenosha, Wisconsin, amid anger over the shooting of another Black man by police.

Trump unleashed a flurry of tweets and retweets the day after a man identified as a supporter of a right-wing group was shot and killed in Portland.

The city has been the site of months of daily protests, and a large caravan of Trump supporters and Black Lives Matter protesters clashed Saturday night.

Trump praised the caravan participants as "GREAT PATRIOTS" and retweeted what appeared to be the dead man's name along with a message to "Rest in peace".

Trump also retweeted those who blamed the city's Democratic mayor for the death.

"The people of Portland,

like all other cities & parts

of our great Country, want Law & Order," Trump wrote Sunday. "The Radical Left Democrat

Mayors, like the dummy

running Portland, or the guy right now in his basement unwilling to lead or even speak out against crime, will never be able to do it!"

Trump has throughout

State cops in Portland to probe clashes death

Portland, Aug. 31: State Police will return to Portland to help local authorities after the fatal shooting of a man following clashes between President Donald Trump supporters and counter-protesters that led to an argument between the president and the mayor over who was to blame for the violence.

Protesters were back on the streets for a demonstration Sunday night out-

side a public safety building. Police declared an unlawful assembly and arrested 29 people. Two of those arrested had handguns and others had knives and at least one had an expandable baton, police said.

Many wore helmets, gas masks, goggles and external armour. Police said some carried shields and reflective squares used to reflect police lights back toward officers. — AP

4 hurt in shooting at Kansas City club

Kansas City, Aug. 31: Four people were shot and injured Sunday at a night club in Kansas City, Missouri, where a mass shooting occurred in January, police said.

Kansas City Police spokesman Sgt Jake Beccina said the latest shooting at the Nine Ultra Lounge was reported around 2.30 a.m. Sunday.

the summer cast American cities as under siege by violence and lawlessness, despite the fact that most of the demonstrations against racial injustice have been largely peaceful. With about

Investigators said the shooting was related to an argument that started inside the club and then moved outside where several people fired shots. One victim found at the scene with several gunshot wounds was taken to a hospital. Three others arrived separately at hospitals. All four victims remained stable. — AP

nine weeks until Election Day, some of his advisers see an aggressive "law and order" message as the best way for the President to turn voters against his Democratic rival, Joe Biden. — AP

Adib faces the nearly impossible challenge of embodying change after being picked by the political establishment.

Adib's name only emerged on Sunday to replace Hassan Diab,

whose government resigned in the aftermath of the deadly August 4 blast at Beirut port. The 48-year-old was born in the northern city of Tripoli and is a Sunni Muslim, making him eligible to become Prime Minister under Lebanon's sectarian-based power-sharing system.

His biography on the Berlin embassy website presents him as an ac-

CORONAVIRUS CASES IN U.S. NEAR 6 MILLION

New York, Aug. 31:

The United States neared six million Coronavirus cases on Sunday, nearly a quarter of the planet's total, as nations around the world battle to contain the raging pandemic.

Global Coronavirus infections soared past 25 million, as countries tightened restrictions to halt the health crisis that has upended life for most of humanity.

A million additional cases have been detected globally roughly every four days since mid-July, according to an AFP tally, with India on Sunday setting the record for the highest single-day rise in cases with 78,761.

The United States had recorded 5.99 million cases of infection as of 0030 GMT Monday, according to Johns Hopkins University's tracker. The death toll is just over 183,000. The US hit five million cases three weeks ago, just 17 days after reaching four million, the tracker said.

The virus has hobbled the US economy and cast a shadow over President Donald Trump's once-promising re-election prospects. — AP

Lebanon's PM-designate vows reforms

Beirut, Aug. 31: Lebanese Prime Minister-designate Mustapha Adib vowed Monday to swiftly

launch a reformist government and seek international financial assistance after the Beirut blast deepened a political and economic crisis.

In a televised speech after his nomination, Lebanon's former ambassador to Germany said there is "a need to form a

government in record time and to begin implementing reforms immediately, starting with an agreement with the International Monetary Fund".

Adib faces the nearly impossible challenge of embodying change after being picked by the political establishment.

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whose government resigned in the aftermath of the deadly August 4 blast at Beirut port.

The 48-year-old was born in the northern city of Tripoli and is a Sunni Muslim, making him eligible to become Prime Minister under Lebanon's sectarian-based power-sharing system.

From 2000 to 2004, he served as an adviser to Najib Mikati, a billionaire and former prime minister.

demic who holds a PhD in political science. It says he has conducted "research and expert work in the areas of both human and state security, parliamentary oversight of the security sector, decentralisation and local democracy, and electoral laws".

His biography on the Berlin embassy website presents him as an ac-

count the foreigners in our midst — regardless of race, language or religion — as our friends, Channel News Asia quoted Singh as saying.

It is precisely because we need foreigners to help power our economy that we need to pay more attention to the Singapore worker... some of whom feel excluded from (the) opportunities created in their homeland, Singh said.

The House passed a motion to double Singh's speaking time from 20 minutes — which is allotted to backbenchers — to 40 minutes, the duration allotted to office holders.

Singh took the seat directly opposite Prime Minister Lee in the chamber. This is similar to the practice in other countries that formally recognise the role of the Leader of the Opposition, Indraneel Manpower to publish the names of "recalcitrant" employers who do not give locals a fair chance in hiring and promotion. The MOM had recently placed 47 companies on the Fair Consideration Framework (FCF) watchlist. — AP

Singapore, Aug. 31: Pritam Singh, Singapore's Indian-origin politician scripted history on Monday when the city-state's Parliament conferred the duties and privileges to him as the country's first Leader of the Opposition.

Singh's Workers' Party won 10 parliamentary seats out of the 93 it contested in the July 10 General Election, making it the biggest opposition presence in Singapore's parliamentary history.

As the House began proceedings on Monday, one of the first orders of business

was a ministerial statement by the Leader of the House Indranee Rajah on formally recognising Singh, 43, as the country's first Opposition leader.

Addressing Parliament, Singh underlined the need to focus on foreigners and their living conditions. He said how foreign workers are managed and accommodated needs to be improved.

Their (foreigners) presence gives Singapore a vitality that keeps us economically relevant and also provides jobs and opportunities to our fellow Singaporeans. Many of us

count the foreigners in our midst — regardless of race, language or religion — as our friends, Channel News Asia quoted Singh as saying.

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Merkel condemns 'shameful' virus stir**38,000 had gathered in Berlin on Saturday to protest restrictions to curb Coronavirus**

Berlin, Aug. 31: German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Monday condemned as "shameful" an attempt by protesters angry at Coronavirus restrictions to storm Parliament, saying they had abused the right to demonstrate peacefully.

Several hundred people tried to get into the Reichstag building during a rally against Coronavirus rules in Berlin on Saturday.

"This right to demonstrate peacefully is of course a very valuable asset even during a pandemic," Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said at a government press conference in Berlin.

However, he said their actions were "a clear

Germany tells Russia to probe poisoning

Paris, Aug. 31: Germany on Monday urged Moscow to step up its efforts to investigate the apparent poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny who is currently being treated at a Berlin hospital in a coma.

Foreign minister Heiko Maas said in an address to French ambassadors that Europe needed "constructive" relations with Russia for the sake of the continent's own security but it was clear now that "dark clouds" were hanging over bilateral ties.

"Of course we have the expectation that Russia should contribute more to clearing up of the Navalny case than it is doing at the moment," he said alongside French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian.

Berlin's Charite hospital said on Friday there was "some improvement" in Navalny's condition, but the 44-year-old remains in a medically induced coma and on a ventilator. Navalny fell ill after boarding a plane in Siberia earlier this month. — AFP

entering the building by police, who used pepper spray and arrested several people.

Merkel praised as "quick-witted and brave" three police officers who were seen pushing back crowds from the entrance to the Reichstag alone until reinforcements arrived.

Police estimated 38,000 people, double the number expected, gathered in Berlin on Saturday to protest at restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the Coronavirus, such as wearing masks and social distancing. Several hundred broke through barriers and a police cordon to climb the steps leading to the entrance to the Reichstag. They were narrowly prevented from

Bundestag." About 300 people were arrested in scuffles with police, in front of the Reichstag but also outside the Russian embassy, where protesters pelted police with bottles.

Resistance to Coronavirus restrictions in Germany has gathered pace in recent weeks with demos attracting a diverse crowd of conspiracy theorists, anti-vaxxers and far-right or far-left activists. Health minister Jens Spahn was spat at at the weekend as he tried to talk to protesters in Bergisch Gladbach. Seibert condemned the incident, saying it was "certainly not democratic dialogue". — AFP

China carries out forced medication on Uighurs

Beijing, Aug. 31: The government in China's far northwest Xinjiang region is resorting to draconian measures to combat the Coronavirus, including spraying detainees with acidic disinfectant, physically locking residents in homes, imposing strict quarantines of more than 40 days and arresting those who do not comply.

Furthermore, in what experts call a breach of medical ethics, some residents are being coerced into swallowing tradition-

al Chinese medicine despite a lack of rigorous clinical data proving it works, according to government notices, social media posts, and interviews with three people in quarantine in Xinjiang.

One middle-aged Uighur woman said that when she was detained at the height of China's Coronavirus outbreak, she was forced to drink a medicine that made her feel weak and nauseous. She and others in her cell had to strip naked once a week as guards hosed them and

their cells down with disinfectant, she said.

"It was scalding," recounted the woman by phone from Xinjiang, declining to be named out of fear of retribution.

"My hands were ruined, my skin was peeling."

The latest grueling lockdown, now in its 45th day, comes in response to 826 cases reported in Xinjiang since mid-July, China's largest caseload since the initial outbreak.

The lockdown is especially striking because of its severity. — AP

Strike chief held in Belarus crackdown

Minsk, Aug. 31: Belarus' authorities on Monday detained the organiser of a strike at a top industrial plant, part of a methodical effort to stifle weeks of

protests demanding the resignation of the country's authoritarian leader of 26 years after an election the opposition denounced as being rigged.

President Alexander Lukashenko has dismissed the protesters as Western puppets and rejected the European Union's offers of mediation. After a ferocious crackdown on demonstrators in the first days after the August 9 vote that caused international outrage, his government has

avoided large-scale violence against demonstrators and sought to end the protests with threats and the selective jailing of activists.

Anatoly Bokun, who leads the strike committee at Belaruskali, a huge potash factory in Soligorsk, was detained by police and is

DECCAN Chronicle

1 SEPTEMBER 2020

As Covid-19 cases spike, go slower on 'unlocking'

As the Centre and states open up more sectors and allow the resumption of further activities from Tuesday, September 1, as India begins the "Unlock 4.0" phase, it is important not to forget how the pandemic is spiralling across the country, with daily coronavirus cases crossing 80,000 Sunday, the highest anywhere in the world. The last week of August witnessed a huge spurt in cases, and not just in Maharashtra and some southern states but also Delhi, that earlier seemed to have the numbers under control. And while there has also been a considerable increase in the number of tests per day, which is likely to rise, there is no hard evidence to say the rise in infections detected is primarily due to the increased testing – as health officials and the government fondly hope.

One really wonders how the Centre and state governments are confident that this is the right moment to open more activities. Schools/colleges will remain shut till September 30, but the authorities have decided to go ahead with the JEE and NEET exams for medical and engineering admissions, which will expose thousands of students across the country to the risk of contracting the virus. Also, teachers and some students from Classes 9 to 12 might be called to schools for "guidance" from later in September, the first time most will come into physical contact with each other since March – which again appears to be an avoidable step.

Most important, the government's decision to allow the resumption of Metro rail services – even if in a staggered manner – appears premature. To allow public transport buses (with 20 people allowed and with seats spaced out; or taxis or autos, with two/three passengers) is one thing, but the Metro trains carry thousands of passengers travelling in close proximity, not to mention the thousands who will collect at Metro stations even if the capacity on the trains is restricted. All this creates a situation which might facilitate the spread of the virus. A serious rethink needs to be done prior to September 7, when Metro services are set to resume, and it should be permitted only in those areas where the Covid-19 pandemic is completely under control. That, unfortunately, is not yet the case in any of India's major metropolises.

From September 21, social, religious, political, academic and sports functions can be held with up to 100 people, and weddings and funerals (now allowed with lesser numbers) will be permitted with 100 people. This, in our view, is also premature, and should wait till things stabilise further. The festival season is fast approaching, and it is vital to set strict norms now to ensure that low-key celebrations are held which will not endanger people's lives. There is, of course, the counter-argument: that we must "learn to live with Covid" till a vaccine is found and distributed, which might take up to a year, and that people cannot put off economic and other activities indefinitely. The lockdown that India imposed in March was one of the world's harshest – which severely hurt a lot of people and its benefits remain debatable. But now we might be swinging to the other extreme – rapidly opening up activities without considering all the consequences. We need to find a balance – and move a little slower.

Trouble for NRC 'rejects'

The stalemate in the process of preparing the Supreme Court-mandated National Register of Citizens in Assam has put the lives of 19 lakh-odd people who were excluded from it in serious trouble. The process mandates that each excluded person should be issued a rejection slip which can be challenged in the Foreigners Tribunal, which is empowered to declare a person non-citizen. The failure to issue the slips has stalled the entire process. As a result, those affected face difficulties in matters of their normal life such as finding a job, getting married, going on a foreign tour and contesting polls. The government blames it on Covid-19, which made most government departments other than those involved in the containment of the pandemic non-functional for months on end.

The very process of preparing the NRC was riddled with serious issues. It was at first perceived as an attempt to exclude Muslims who had migrated to Assam from other parts of the country. Serious discrepancies such as members of the same family getting different status were reported as soon as the list was published. The BJP, which had all along called it a tool to "eliminate infiltrators", changed its stand after discovering that a third of those excluded were Hindus. The party's Assam unit called for the verification of the list but it looks next to impossible after reports said the basic data of the NRC has been lost.

Citizenship is the primary identity of a person, and its denial, rightly or wrongly, compromises the very right to life. No government has the right to keep a decision on it pending for long. The government must admit that it had not thought through the process and hence the present mess. It must either cancel the entire exercise or fast-track it. This is not an issue for which it can blame an act of God.

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Aakar Patel

'Unlock' rules are illogical: If flights allowed, why not trains?

From Tuesday, September 1, we will have Unlock 4.0. I have lost track of what this means and I do not think anybody really understands it. What the Indian government has done is try and manage the spread of Covid-19 by keeping things shut. If India forces people to stay away from one another by denying them access to services, it will stop or slow the spread of the infection.

This has produced rules that, as I said, I do not really understand. For instance, the airlines have been operating since May, and have been flying for more than three months now. Flights are allowed to be flown at full capacity, with the middle seat occupied. However, the Indian Railways is still by and large largely shut, and has been shut since the lockdown began. From running 17,000 trains daily, it today runs only 230 special ones. What is the logic of not having trains run when planes are allowed to run full? Air passengers cannot maintain the six-foot separation on their seats so it seems illogical to allow people to fly but not travel by train.

The benefit to the stopping the spread of Covid-19 is uncertain but

Schools and colleges will remain shut but exams will continue to be held. If we are asking all schools and colleges to do online classes, why are we then asking students to gather in masses to take their exams?

the damage to the economy is visible. Reports from Surat last month said that the production of textiles was less than 25 per cent of normal and the big reason was the lack of labour.

More than 30 lakh people had left Surat and its surrounding industrial zones in April and May, according to a report in the Hindu Frontline magazine published on July 31. There is almost no way for these people to return to their jobs even if they wanted to now come back. There are reports that mill owners and other businesses have begun flying labourers back. But why not just open the Railways? This has not been explained to us.

Delhi's Metro will reportedly open this week with 50 per cent capacity (again note the difference with airlines), while Mumbai's local trains, the city's lifeline and its artery, have stayed shut. I saw a very moving note from journalists to the chief minister asking that those who were not accredited with the government to be allowed to use the trains because it was too expensive for them to take taxis everywhere.

Schools and colleges will remain shut but exams will continue to be held. Again, this makes no sense to me. If we are asking all schools and colleges to do online classes, why are we then asking students to gather in masses to take their exams?

We are told that cinema halls will have to stay shut as it won't be feasible to run shows with only 25 per cent capacity due to physical distancing norms. But a movie is about as long as a flight and the seats are equidistant in both. What is the thinking behind the decision to disallow movie halls, a very large sector of the entertainment industry and its employment, from opening?

It all seems slightly eccentric to me, and I suspect that some of this is

touched with the moralism that we see in the Prime Minister. For instance, restaurants were allowed to open but not bars. Why? There is no standard format in a restaurant's seating, as we know. And the same is true for bars. The only reason seems to be that the government in some way looks down on those who drink.

In Unlock 4.0 bars, will be allowed to serve liquor over the counter but not inside. Meaning the bar will be turned into a liquor store and the employment that its waiters and cooks and other staff would have otherwise got is not available even today, in September, more than five full months after the lockdown began.

Some of the confusion has then come from the Centre versus State differences. Apparently, the opening of gyms is allowed by the Centre but many of the states are not letting them do so.

In other nations, the lockdowns have been mostly voluntary. In India, it has been like a curfew. Even today, the Mumbai police can confiscate your vehicle if you cannot show a "good reason" for being out. What is a "good reason" is left for the

police to determine of course. We have one nation one tax, but we do not have the free movement of people. Those going from one state to another state must fill out some application and ask for permission which may or may not be given.

As I said at the beginning, India has tried to slow or stop the spread of Covid-19 through denial of services. Has it worked? I don't think so. India is the only large nation along with Argentina whose numbers have continuously and without a break risen from March. The only way of stopping the spread of Covid-19 is good individual behaviour at the mass level. But we have Union ministers in meetings wearing their masks on their chin instead of covering their mouth and nose. How can such people communicate good behaviour to the public? They simply cannot. And so we have the endless tweaking of rules, all leading to failure as is visible in the numbers, with bureaucrats being kept busy making funny and illogical rules for 1.0 and 2.0 and 3.0 and now 4.0.

Aakar Patel is a senior journalist and columnist

Subhani

INDIA CAPABLE OF BECOMING TOY HUB: MODI



LETTERS

MANN KI BAAT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was full of surprises in his Mann ki Baat (Vizag's wooden toymaker to go electric after PM pat, DC, Aug. 31). By getting a mention in PM's talk, artisans and small-scale industries got hope now, which should be followed by help from the state. But his suggestion to fellow Indians to rear dogs of Indian breed is quite puzzling. Perhaps, every (Indian) dog has its day! Dr D.V.G.Sankararao Vizianagaram

Finally Prime Minister Narendra Modi recognised an Indian artisan's work that too Etikoppaka toymaker C.V. Raju from AP. He also rightly spoke about the skills and quality of our products and mechanical devices which are to be added to Etikoppaka toys to gain a majority toy market worldwide. A big help from governments is urgently necessary for the toy industry which is now suffering a lot due to Covid-19.

Panchakarla Govardhana Rao Krishna

MUHARRAM & VIRUS

Thousands of people participated in the Bibi ka Alam procession in Hyderabad on Sunday. This should serve as a yardstick to know whether such gatherings where people did not use facemasks or maintained social distancing are a source of increase in Covid-19 cases and if there is no remarkable increase in the cases in the next one week or so then we can rest assured that the pandemic is on the diminishing trend.

N.S. Sharma Visakhapatnam

Five die in Calcutta firing

CALCUTTA, AUGUST 31 Five persons were killed and five others seriously injured in police firings at three places in North Calcutta today.

Two most serious incidents were at Bidhan Sarani and Girish Chandra Avenue both in

north Calcutta. Police fired four rounds killing two

people when a police picket was attacked with bombs near Star Theatre at Girish Chandra Avenue in the Bagbazar area. A police vehicle was subjected to heavy brickbats and bomb attacks. Teargassing proving ineffective, police opened fire from revolvers killing two people and injuring four others.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.



quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	38,628.29 -2.13
Nifty 50	11,387.50 -2.23
S&P 500*	3,505.94 -0.06
Dollar (₹)	73.60 -0.27
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.93 0.50
Euro (₹)	87.50 0.10
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,638▲161 0.30
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.84 0.03
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.078 -0.019
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.723 -0.006

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Trai gives Voda Idea time till Sept. 4 to reply

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has granted additional time till September 4 to Vodafone Idea to respond to its showcase notice on the firm's priority plan, a source said. Trai had slapped a showcause notice on Vodafone Idea over its pay-more-for-priority-treatment mobile plan, saying the tariff offer "lacks transparency", is "misleading" and not in compliance with regulatory framework.

Vedanta ties with SBI for ₹10,000 cr syndicated loan



Vedanta Ltd said it has tied up with State Bank of India for a long-term syndicated loan facility worth Rs 10,000 crore. A syndicated loan is offered by a group of lenders. SBI has given a commitment of Rs 5,000 crore as a lender. Hindustan Zinc, a subsidiary of Vedanta, said in a filing to the BSE. The facility end-use stipulates refinancing of near-term debt maturities of Vedanta and for capital expenditure.

Cyient to acquire Oz consulting firm IG Partners

Cyient said it has agreed to acquire Australian consulting firm IG Partners, a move that will help the Indian IT firm expand its end-to-end offerings for the local and regional resources sector. The rationale for the acquisition is gaining access to decision makers with global mining majors, acceleration in Cyient's mining strategy and positioning Cyient as a digital transformation leader in the market, the company said.

L&T completes divestment of Schneider arm

Engineering and construction giant Larsen and Toubro on Monday said it has completed the strategic divestment of its electrical and automation business to Schneider Electric. The move will see India becoming the third largest country in terms of revenues for Schneider Electric. With this, about 5,000 employees of L&T's electrical and automation business will be integrated with Schneider's 2,000 employees.



■ Sebi's new margin rules sour sentiments

Border clash, GDP worries fell stocks

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, AUG. 31

Market benchmark Sensex fell more than 1,600 points intra-day on fresh China military buildup and unconfirmed reports of clashes in the Ladakh region. This unexpected development together with fear of a likely sharp fall in the first quarter GDP growth, scheduled to be announced after market hours, led to profit-taking in the market.

The selling pressure may increase on Tuesday, with GDP contracting by -23.9 per cent in the June quarter.

"Indian Army informed that Chinese troops violated the earlier agreement and carried out provocative military movements to change the status quo on the nights of August 29-30," reports said.

Sameet Chavan, chief analyst-technical and derivatives at Angel Broking, said, the sell-off was triggered mainly by the news of India-China clash once again taking place at the border. This resulted in a massive liquidation in the market by continued selling in the remaining part of the day.

New Sebi rule for margins in equity trading coming into effect from September 1 also played spoilsport in the second half of trading, as the market regulator has declined an extension being sought by the broking community.

Sensex and Nifty-50 final-



Figures in ₹ Source: KBK Infographics

ly closed more than 2 per cent down after strong early morning gains pushed the Sensex above the 40,000 mark.

The Sensex closed 839 points down at 38,628.39, recovering partly from the day's low of 38,395.89 and the Nifty-50 closed at 11,387.50, down by 260 points.

Investors lost more than Rs 4.55 lakh crore in a day as the broader market fell more, with the BSE Mid-cap Index down 3.79 per cent and the BSE Small-cap Index down 4.73 per cent.

All sectoral indices closed down by 2 to 4.5 per cent except the IT index, which was down over half

a per cent. Sectoral heavy-weight banks and financials fell heavily with the BSE Bankex Index plunging 3.29 per cent and the Nifty Bank by 3.14 per cent.

Deepak Jasani, head of retail research, HDFC Securities, said, "The change in margin system and securities pledge-repledging could undoubtedly bring disruptions in volumes of daily trading, as there is insufficient preparation and validation by the participants in this system, viz. exchanges, depositories, depository participants, Clearing Corporation, brokers and clients."

The Hybrit project aims to reduce CO2 emissions to 25 kg per tonne of steel from about 1.6 tonnes by using hydrogen to produce direct reduced iron (DRI) as a feedstock, along with scrap, to make the metal. Electrolysing water from renewable energy sources will generate the hydrogen.

Product launch in a "big, commercial scale"

is planned for the first quarter of 2026 and will target "the automotive industry and others," Lindqvist said in an interview. —Bloomberg

SWEDEN MOVES CLOSER TO MAKING FOSSIL-FUEL-FREE STEEL

HANNA HOIKKALA & TERJE SOLSVIK
OSLO, AUG. 31

A Swedish joint venture that hopes to rewrite the rules of steel production took a major step forward on Monday.

Hybrit, an initiative run by steelmaker SSAB AB, iron ore producer LKAB and energy supplier Vattenfall AB, aims to remove fossil fuels from the steelmaking value chain by replacing coking coal with hydrogen and clean energy.

The project is now starting test operations for the production of fossil-free sponge iron — something that SSAB's chief executive Martin Lindqvist sees as a "milestone" given the industry accounts for 7 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions globally and 10% in Sweden, he said.

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Norway fund drops Page Inds. over human rights breach risk

GWLADYS FOUCHE & TERJE SOLSVIK
OSLO, AUG. 31

Norway's \$1 trillion wealth fund said it had excluded Taiwan's Formosa Chemicals and Fibre, Formosa Taffeta and India's Page Industries from its portfolio, saying they posed an "unacceptable risk for violation of human rights".

The world's largest sovereign wealth fund sells holdings before announcing such exclusions to avoid excessive market moves.

Formosa Chemicals and Fibre declined to comment. An official reached by telephone at Formosa Taffeta said the company was closed for the day. Page Industries was not immediately reachable for comment.

In recent years, the fund, which operates under guidelines established by the Norwegian parliament, has focused on working conditions in textile factories in Asia, excluding companies



that pose an ethical risk to its investments.

Set up in 1996 to preserve Norway's oil revenues for future generations, the fund holds around 1.5 per cent of globally listed shares and its decisions are often followed by other investors.

Formosa Chemicals and Fibre had been under observation for possible exclusion since 2017 and had not responded to inquiries from the fund's ethics watchdog, the Council on Ethics, Norges Bank said.

The board of the Norwegian central bank, which manages the fund, concluded "active ownership" was therefore appropriate. —Reuters

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, AUG. 31

SHORT TAKES
Root returns for ODIs, misses T20s

Manchester: England announced on Monday they had recalled several World Cup winners for their upcoming white-ball series against Australia but Test captain Joe Root has again been omitted from the Twenty20 squad.

Fifty-over world champions England have been fielding separate red and white ball squads in a season hit by the coronavirus pandemic. But with all six Tests spanning two series wins against the West Indies and Pakistan now completed, England have recalled some of their multi-format players for next month's limited-overs matches against Australia.

Root was the third-highest run-scorer at the 2016 T20 World Cup but has not played a T20 international for over a year, despite still wanting to feature in the format. He has, however, hit scores of 64 and 65 for Yorkshire in this season's Twenty20 Blast.

— AFP

Birdie bomb lifts Rahm to victory

Washington: Jon Rahm drained a swinging 60-foot birdie putt at the first playoff hole on Sunday to win the US PGA Tour BMW Championship over world number one Dustin Johnson. Spain's Rahm, ranked second in the world behind Johnson, was in the right rough off the tee at the first playoff hole, the 18th at Olympia Fields near Chicago. His second shot rolled to the back of the green, leaving him what could have been a tough two-putt for par. "Never did I think I'd be making another 50-, 60-footer — couple of breaks in there, too — to end up winning it," said Rahm, who gave a roaring fist pump as the putt dropped. Johnson's tee shot was also off course, but ricocheted off a tree to settle in the fairway. The American found the middle of the green, but his birdie attempt settled inches from the cup. — AFP

Oly flame out on display in Tokyo

Tokyo: The Olympic flame is going on display in Tokyo, just a short walk from the new National Stadium where it was supposed to be burning a month ago. The flame arrived in Japan from Greece in March and has been largely hidden away in Tokyo since the Olympics were postponed until next year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The flame was unveiled on Monday at a small ceremony with Yoshiro Mori, the president of the Tokyo Olympic organising committee, and Yasuhiro Yamashita, the president of the Japanese Olympic Committee. The flame will be on display beginning at the new Japan Olympic Museum for at least the next two months. — AFP

Ewan takes Tour Stage 3 honours

Sisteron, France: Australian Caleb Ewan timed his effort to perfection to win the third stage of the Tour de France in a bunch sprint at the end of a 198-km hilly ride through the Alpine foothills on Monday. Sam Bennett looked in control but the Irishman had probably underestimated the headwind and settled for second place as he watched Lotto-Soudal fast-man Ewan whiz around him to snatch his fourth stage win on the Tour. Italian Giacomo Nizzolo took third place. France's Julian Alaphilippe retained the overall leader's yellow jersey. — Reuters

Live on TV
CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Jamaica Tallawahs vs Trinbago Knight Riders from 7.30 pm; Guyana Amazon Warriors vs Barbados Tridents from 3 am (Tuesday) on Star Sports 1, 2, HD

CRICKET

England vs Pakistan third T20 from 10.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

TENNIS

US Open matches from 8.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

WWE RAW

Bouts from 5.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1, 3, HD

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SURASH SHOT!

CSK might part ways with their star Raina


AB de Villiers (centre) of the Royal Challenger Bangalore during a training session in Dubai.

Dhoni should bat at No. 3: Gambhir

New Delhi, Aug. 31: Mahendra Singh Dhoni should be batting at number three for Chennai Super Kings now that Suresh Raina has pulled out of the Indian Premier League, feels former India opener Gautam Gambhir. Raina pulled out of the IPL due to "personal reasons" and Gambhir thinks that Dhoni, who has been away from the game for over a year, should try and play as many balls possible. "It will be a good opportunity for M.S. Dhoni to come and bat at No. 3," Gambhir said on Star Sports' show.

— PTI

GANGULY SEES HIGHEST IPL TV RATINGS

Pune, Aug. 31: Bullish about the IPL's success as a TV-only event, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Monday said he expects the T20 extravaganza to shatter viewer-share records this year.

The IPL begins on September 19 and will be played across three cities in the UAE — Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah.

"Crowds will watch it on television... they (the broadcasters) are actually expecting the highest rating of IPL this season because they believe if (people) don't turn up in the ground, they will be actually watching on their television sets. There is a positive in everything," Ganguly said while delivering an online lecture as part of the 'Symbiosis Golden Jubilee Lecture Series'.

Ganguly also said holding the IPL was important to ensure a sense of normalcy amid the pandemic. Asked how cricketers would feel about playing in front of empty stands, Ganguly said, "...because of the COVID and infection, you don't want people to be too close to each other, but very soon you will see there will be 30 per cent people in the ground with social distancing."

"They are properly tested and allowed to enter the ground. But I think that is going to happen over a period of time," he added referring to the possibility of IPL's later matches being opened for fans depending on the Covid-19 situation.

"...it is actually an effort to bring life back to normal. This will go on for another five-six months till the vaccine comes and I am sure everything then will be back to normal," he asserted.

— PTI

Five Star Lyon ladies leap for joy



Lyon players run towards the trophy after beating VFL Wolfsburg in the UEFA Women's Champions League football final in San Sebastian, Spain, on Sunday. Lyon won 3-1 to win their fifth straight Champions League. — AFP

Chess players deserve better: Anand

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, AUG. 31

The first online chess Olympiad that witnessed an anticlimactic finish due to a global internet outage has triggered controversy after India and Russia were declared joint winners. Russian grandmaster Daniil Dubov didn't mince words when he termed the event a "circus" and said "don't just call it an Olympiad and it was a failure." There was a hint of disappointment, however, didn't stop the Indian team from celebrating their maiden Olympiad gold by organising an online meeting

where each member of the side spoke about the memorable day. During the final, India's Nihal Sarin and Divya Deshmukh were disconnected from the host server. Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand said the global internet outage wasn't India's fault. "We did nothing wrong. We were ready for anything. We were ready to play two games or even six games. Fide looked at the big picture," he said. The veteran player from Chennai feels the issues in the All India Chess Federation could be a reason for the awards snub. "I think some of it might be due to various issues they have brought up pertaining to the code of conduct and so on. And our federation has had some difficulties. But it would be nice to reset this," he said.

Anand said the best way

to change the scenario is not by writing long letters to the editor but by having good results like the Olympiad success. "I hope that this result will have a positive impact and that they will look at chess as they did years ago. Several years ago they had recognised this as one of the sports where we do incredibly well... and that we have a good team. And I hope this will have an impact and we will once again start coming in for Arjuna and Dronacharya awards," he noted.

Grandmaster P. Harikrishna said it's the responsibility of the fed-

eration to take up this

issue. "It is sad that none of the chess players have won an Arjuna Award or Dronacharya Award for several years. But these are not the reasons why chess players are playing the game. These are however small things that the govt and federation can take up," he noted.

Terming it a golden moment for the Indian chess fraternity, Koneru Humpy said Sunday's success would motivate many youngsters to pursue chess professionally. "We always talked about winning a medal at the Olympiad. I am happy that it has finally happened," she added.

Sandeep is out of Hyd, goes to Goa

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 31

After A. T. Rayudu and G. H. Vihari, Hyderabad has lost one more good cricketer to another state — top order batsman Bavanaka Sandeep has decided to play for Goa in the Ranji Trophy from this year. The 28-year-old received his no objection certificate from the Hyderabad Cricket Association on Monday.

The left-handed batsman is believed to have lost faith in the administrators, selectors and others who call the shots in the HCA after being overlooked many a time, including being dropped from the side despite doing well. He currently has the best batting average in the team.

He was also miffed at not being pitched for South Zone teams despite good performances. Former India player and Hyderabad captain Rayudu was instrumental in weaning Sandeep away from the HCA, it is reliably learnt.

Sandeep is currently in Dubai for the IPL with the Sunrisers Hyderabad team, which he made this year after impressive shows in Twenty20 matches.



Bavanaka Sandeep

es — he averaged 87 with a strike rate of 140 last season.

As an 18-year-old, Sandeep announced his arrival with a bang in Ranji Trophy, scoring a century (144) on debut against Jharkhand in November 2010 after Hyderabad was shot out for a humiliating 21 by Rajasthan in the previous match, triggering an overhaul of the team. He has scored 3,631 runs in 58 first class games since, averaging 44.82 with seven centuries, including a double ton, and 21 fifties. A part-time left-arm spinner, Sandeep also has 12 wickets against his name.

US OPEN | TENNIS



Angelique Kerber of Germany returns a shot during her women's singles first round match against Ajla Tomljanovic of Australia on the first day of the US Open tennis championships at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center on Monday in New York City. — AFP

Kerber cruises into 2nd round

New York, Aug. 31: Former champion

Angelique Kerber returned to action for the first time in seven months and beat Australian Ajla Tomljanovic 6-4, 6-4 on Monday to reach the second round of the U.S. Open.

In the second, Kerber settled into a groove and broke her opponent twice before sealing the win on her third match point when a Tomljanovic forehand sailed long.

The US Open is the first Grand Slam to be contested since the Covid-19 pandemic shutdown global tennis in March.

Meanwhile, Novak Djokovic sets out on his quest for an 18th Grand Slam title at the US Open with his world number one standing enhanced in the latest ATP rankings released on Monday. The Serb headlines the opening day at Flushing Meadows where he faces Damir Dzumhur of Bosnia-Herzegovina. — Agencies

OLYMPIC GOLD'S THRILL LASTED 2 SECS: BINDRA

New Delhi, Aug. 31: Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra says the thrill — the biggest of his life — lasted merely two seconds after his gold at Beijing Games where relief was the first and only emotion he felt despite scripting history.

A web series titled *The Finish Line* has conceptualised to relive eight defining moments of Indian sports through the athletes themselves. And Bindra was the first guest to feature on the show hosted by ace squash player Saurav Ghosal.

"It was the greatest emotion that I had felt. I was very happy as this moment was the biggest thrill of my life, that thrill lasted for two seconds and that's it," Bindra said on the show, recalling the moment 12 years later.

"The greatest emotion I felt at that moment was the feeling of relief because, throughout my journey, I have been very obsessive with my goal. All my eggs were in one basket, certainly not the way I promote to young athletes. It was a huge amount of relief that, what I had set out to do in my life, I was able to achieve that," he said.

Bindra remains India's only individual gold medallist at the Olympics and he came tantalisingly close to adding another podium finish at the 2016 Rio Games, only to miss out by a point. — PTI