

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

NELLORE | WEDNESDAY | 2 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 34.6°C
Min: 28.9°C
RH: 92%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: clear.
Max/Min temp. 34/28°C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+79,170)	(+1,021)
37,63,509	66,448
covid19india.org	
(+2,734)	(+9)
TS: 1,27,697	836
(+10,368)	(+84)
AP: 4,45,139	4,053

CASES AROUND THE WORLD	DEATHS
2,57,75,868	
8,57,439	
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	213
worldometers.info/coronavirus	

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrapada Shuddha Pournami till 10.53 am
Star: Satabisham till 6.35 pm
Varjyam: 1.35 am to 3.20 am (Thursday)
Durmuhurta: 11.51 am to 12.40 pm
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Muhamram 13, 1442 AH
PRAYERS(SHANI MASJID)
Fajar: 4.46 am
Zohar: 12.10 pm
Asar: 4.33 pm
Magrib: 6.23 pm
Isha: 7.34 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.20 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.42 AM
MOONSET TODAY 6.42 PM

COUNTER POINT



We always have our eyes on their land except when we have breakfast, lunch and dinner!

IN BRIEF

Rajiv Kumar joins poll panel

New Delhi: Former bureaucrat Rajiv Kumar on Tuesday assumed charge as the new election commissioner. He takes the place vacated by Ashok Lavasa who joins the Asian Development Bank as vice president.

Kumar, a retired 1984-batch IAS officer of the Jharkhand cadre, will have a five-year tenure and retire in 2025.

He will preside over the next Lok Sabha polls in 2024. According to rules, an election commissioner has six years on the post or till he turns 65, whichever is earlier. Kumar was born in February, 1960. He worked in the government in different capacities during his 36-year long service. — PTI

NGT to ascertain mangrove damage

Kakinada: The National Green Tribunal (NGT), southern zone, has appointed a joint committee to ascertain the state of affairs in the mangroves at Kakinada, opposite the AP Maritime Board office.

NGT said the committee would inspect the area in question and submit a factual as well as action taken report on or before October 13 by e-filing to the NGT. If there is any violation found, including assessment of environmental compensation, it will recommend remedial measures to be taken to restore the damage caused to the environment.

Full report on Page 2



WORLD | 5

Nawaz Sharif gets 10 days to surrender



BUSINESS | 7

August factory orders at pre-Covid levels



SPORTS | 8

Osaka honours victims of racism

Vol. 18 No. 57 Established 1938 | 16 pages | ₹6.00

Revellers ignore Covid



Hundreds of people gather on the road to bid adieu to the Khairatabad Ganesh in Hyderabad on Tuesday, ignoring physical distancing norms to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. — S. SURENDER REDDY

2-yr pause on repayment likely Centre asks SC to allow RBI and banks to decide on interest

New Delhi, Sept. 1: The moratorium period on the repayment of loans during the Covid-19 pandemic is "extendable" by two years and several steps have been taken to help the stressed sectors, the Centre and the RBI told the Supreme Court on Tuesday.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan was informed by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre

and Reserve Bank of India, that the economy contracted by nearly 24 per cent in the April-June quarter due to coronavirus-related lockdown and restrictions.

The bench, also comprising Justices R.S. Reddy and M.R. Shah, said it would hear on Wednesday the pleas which have raised the issue of interest being charged on instalments which have been deferred under the central bank's scheme during the

moratorium period. At the outset, Mehta told the bench that the Centre has filed its affidavit in the matter.

When the court said that it has not yet received the affidavit, he said the bench should look into it and the matter be listed after two-three days.

Mehta said several steps have been taken for stressed sectors. "Let the Central government, RBI and bankers should put

their heads together on the aspect of interest on interest," he said.

"The moratorium is extendable by two years," he added.

Mehta said that authorities have utilised the time and narrowed down the issue to the point on interest.

"There are stressed sectors and national economy has contracted by 23 per cent," Mehta said. — PTI

Jagan mulls farm power meters to get Modi funds

No money to pay employee salaries

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, SEPT. 1

Reeling under severe financial crisis and committed to implementing populist schemes, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has decided to take a political gamble and implement drastic reforms to avail additional borrowings of ₹15,000 crore in the current fiscal.

To begin with, the government on Tuesday announced that meters would be fixed to all agricultural pump sets and the direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme would be implemented wherein power subsidy would be paid to farmers who will pay the distribution companies.

The pilot project in one district will be completed before December 31 and efforts would be made to implement the project throughout the state from the 2021-2022 financial year. The Chief Minister himself may get ready to bite the bullet by implementing the pilot project in his native YSR Kadapa district.

Ironically, energy secretary N. Srikanth brought down the number of agriculture power connections in the state by more than a lakh. While the budget and economic survey put the agriculture connections at 18.72 lakh, the energy secretary in Tuesday's order mentioned 17.55 lakh.

Official sources told Deccan Chronicle that the power sector reform would be followed by levying of user charges for more services and enhancement of charges in urban local bodies. The public distribution system too will witness reforms, sources added.

Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act cap on borrowings — three per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) — the state is permitted to borrow ₹3,00,000 crore for the current fiscal of 2020-21.

Of this, it has already exhausted ₹23,00,000 crore in the first quarter. The government also resorted to out-of-budget borrowings of at least ₹12,000 crore so far.

Though the Centre relaxed FRBM norms and allowed another two per cent borrowings, 1.5 per cent will come with strings attached and only 0.5 per cent can be raised without restrictions.

"Of the ₹5000 crore that can be borrowed without restrictions, we are raising ₹3,000 crore in a day or two," a senior official said adding that another ₹2,000 crore can only be raised in the next seven months.

Page 2: State can borrow ₹35,000 crore

The Centre has relaxed the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act and permitted states to borrow up to five per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) against the present limit of three per cent.

The Central government, however, insisted that the states introduce reforms in power, urban local bodies, PDS sectors and ease of doing business to avail

the 1.5 per cent enhanced limit.

Earlier, the state government had proposed to give an undertaking to implement prescribed reforms in the state but the Central government did not agree and insisted that the reforms should be put in place to avail the additional borrowing.

Page 2: Navaratnalu schemes drained money

FOREIGN SHIPS WITH CHEMICALS NEED PCB'S NOD

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 1

AP Pollution Control Board (APPCB) is in two minds about permitting two foreign vessels, which are together carrying 33,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate, to berth at Visakhapatnam Port and unload the cargo.

One vessel MV Kraseewski has brought 19,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate and has been anchored on the high seas since August 11 after Port Trust refused permission for it to unload on instructions of the PCB. The second ship MV East Ayutthaya with 14,000 tonnes chemical is similarly stranded. Both the vessels had loaded the nitrate from Ukraine.

Page 2: Pressure on for a ban on chemical import

DIFFICULT | TIME

VADREUV SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, SEPT. 1

Covid-19 virus infection has been stigmatised as much as leprosy during the olden days. Nobody is coming forward to conduct funerals though a person may have died of causes other than Coronavirus. Even close relatives and friends are not assisting families in performing last rites.

People of villages or

cities are suspecting that every death is due to Covid-19. This is leading to many problems. Sources said a Kirana merchant died of a non-Coronavirus

March 31, 2031, a bench comprising Justices Arun Mishra, S. Abdul Nazeer and M.R. Shah said that to start with the TSPs would make the payment of 10 per cent of their total AGR dues as demanded by the department of telecommunications by March 31, 2021.

Giving a major relief to telecom service providers (TSPs) facing financial stress, the Supreme Court on Tuesday permitted them to make staggered payment of their Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues over a period of 10 years. The Centre had earlier suggested giving TSPs 20 years' time to make the payments.

Permitting the TSPs, including Airtel and Vodafone-Idea, to clear all their outstanding AGR dues in 10 years, ending on

Son was forced to carry father's body in rickshaw

Covid scare affects funerals

SOCIAL VOLUNTEER

Ameer Pasha said family members of deceased persons are in a state of confusion about performing the last rites. It is volunteers like him who are helping the distressed families in cremating or burying the bodies.

excused themselves saying the death is not due to Covid-19.

Finally in the evening, the son of the deceased hired a rickshaw and carried the body to the burial ground for performing the last rites. "Such incidents pain the heart. But we cannot do anything," K. Ramesh, another Kirana merchant of the village said. He recounted when a relative of his died in Rajahmundry

Coronavirus, the body was carried to the burial ground with the help of some social volunteers, including Ameer Pasha. East Godavari Covid-19 nodal officer B. V. V. Satyanarayana said that if a patient dies of virus, the set protocols need to be followed. Panchayat personnel in villages or officials in municipalities have to disinfect the body and put it in a special package before carrying the body for last rites.

However, social volunteer Ameer Pasha said no such protocols are being followed. Family members of deceased persons are in a state of confusion about performing the last rites. It is volunteers like him who are helping the distressed families in cremating or burying the bodies.

IN BRIEF
PRESSURE ON FOR A BAN ON CHEMICAL IMPORTS

From Page 1

Yet another vessel, said to be carrying around 18,000 tonnes, is also heading for Vizag port.

"We have given permission to Shrawan Shipping to clear the existing stocks. We have laid down certain conditions for further storage and evacuation of stocks. The agency complied has with the conditions and we have sent the file to our head office at Vijayawada. Top officials will take a decision on the matter," said a senior official of APPCB in Visakhapatnam.

Visakhapatnam Port Trust chairman K. Rama Mohan Rao said the port has been waiting for orders from the district administration before allowing the two ships to berth at the port.

Sources say after Narasaraopeta MP Lalu Srikrishna Devayulu wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ban the import of ammonium nitrate and pressure also being exerted by environmentalists, the state government has stopped the vessels on high seas, asking the state pollution control board to impose new conditions for unloading.

India imports 2.7 lakh tonnes of ammonium nitrate annually, with Vizag port unloading 70 per cent of the cargo. The Indian government has no option but to import the nitrate since only one-fourth of the demand is met through production within the country, shipping sources said.

"Given the conditions, the government will have to allow the two ships to unload. It will also have to continue importing ammonium nitrate," said the representative of a well-known shipping agency.

**NAIDU TO DGP:
LAW AND ORDER DECLINING IN STATE**

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu in a letter to DGP Gautam Sawang on Tuesday expressed concern over 'deplorable condition of law and order, death of Dalits under suspicious circumstances and threat to freedom of speech.' He demanded that police take stern action to prevent deterioration in law and order and protection for people.

Mr Naidu, in his letter, condemned attacks on media, referring to alleged vandalism of the house of Telugu daily reporter Venkat Narayana in Kanduru of Somalia mandal in Punganur assembly constituency in Chittoor district for reporting on sand mafia.

POLICE ISSUES NOTICES TO TD LEADERS

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 1

The death of Punganur-based auto-driver Om Pratap, took a controversial turn with Madanapalli sub-division police sending notices to Telugu Desam national president N. Chandrababu Naidu, his son Nara Lokesh and party politburo member Varla Ramaiah for their observations and allegations levelled against the ruling party leaders in connection with the case.

Om Pratap, from Kanduru village in Somalia mandal under Punganur constituency, died last week at his residence, four days after a video in which he abused Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, and the state government for hiking the prices of liquor in the state exploded on social media.

Family members and the local police claimed that he died of some medical ailments. However, TD leaders, including Naidu, Lokesh and Ramaiah, alleged that the Dalit driver had died due to the harassment by the ruling party leaders and demanded a high-level probe in the matter.

The TD chief also wrote a letter to AP DGP, Gowtham Sawang, in which he called for a high-level probe into the death of auto driver and demanded that the call list of the deceased be made public.

Confirming the development with *Deccan Chronicle*, Madanapalli DSP, Ravi Manoharachary, said that they have issued notices under CRPC 91 section to Naidu, Lokesh and Ramaiah via e-mail asking them to submit proof for their observations in this case.

"We asked them to send all the information and evidences for their observations in the case within one week of receiving the notice. We mailed them the notices last night and are yet to receive their reply." Mr Manoharachary said.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy welcomed by Deputy Chief Minister Amjad Basha and former mayor Suresh Babu at Kadapa airport on Tuesday.

— DC

Jagan arrives in Kadapa to pay homage to YSR

1,000 police personnel deployed for CM's security at Idupulapaya

NAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDI | DC
KADAPA, SEPT. 1

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, who arrived at the Kadapa airport on Tuesday evening as part of a two-day visit, received a warm welcome from district officials and public representatives.

The Chief Minister who boarded a special flight at Gannavaram airport at 4 pm on Tuesday along with his wife Bharati, his secretary Dhananjaya Reddy and OSD Krishna Mohan reached the Kadapa airport by 4.45 pm.

Deputy chief minister Suresh Babu along

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He immediately left for Idupulapaya by helicopter. On his arrival at Idupulapaya, he was cordially received by government chief whip Gadikota Srikanth Reddy, MLAs S. Raghuramireddy, Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy, MLC Zakia Khanum and other leaders.

With district collector Chevuri Harikiran, BC welfare minister Srinivas Venugopal Krishna, SP K.N. Anburajan, Kamalapuram MLA Ravindranath Reddy, Railway Koduru MLA Koramula Srinivasu and former Kadapa mayor Suresh Babu welcomed the CM at the airport.

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SHORT TAKES**3 Pawan fans electrocuted in Kuppam**AVINASH P SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 1

Three fans of actor-turned-politician Pawan Kalyan were killed after they were electrocuted while erecting a flexi at the 7th Mile in Santhipuram mandal under Kuppam constituency on Tuesday night.

According to the reports reaching here, three persons identified as Somasekhar, Rajendra and Arunachalam, who are in their 30s, along with four others were tying the flexies of Pawan Kalyan on the eve of his birthday.

They were arranging 25-foot flexies of iron frame at the junction near the 7th mile when they came in contact with the live wire, resulting into the death of three on the spot.

Four more fans also sustained injuries and they are reportedly battling for life in a critical condition. The injured have been rushed to the PES Medical College in Kuppam. Police registered a case and further investigating.

Meanwhile, the Jana Sena chief has offered condolences to the families of the deceased and assured that the party will provide them all the support. TD chief Chandrababu Naidu also offered his condolences.

GODAVARI WATER STILL FLOWS WASTE INTO SEASAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

In just 20 days of flash floods in the Godavari, 2,000 tmc ft of water was discharged into the sea from the Sir Arthur Cotton barrage at Dowlaivaram.

Nearly 3,000 tmc ft of Godavari water gets discharged into the sea from the barrage during the flood season which begins from June ends in September or October every year. This season, following heavy rainfall in catchment areas, the river has received huge inflows from August 10 to 30.

Water resources authorities say that nearly 2,200 tmc ft of water has been discharged into the sea from June, and nearly 22.5 to 23 lakh cusecs of water have been discharged from the barrage during the peak flood period for several days. As water levels at Bhadrachalam are rising again, and recorded at 38.40 ft with a discharge of 6.06 lakh cusecs at 6 pm, authorities are expecting the water level at the Cotton barrage to rise and the present discharge of 2.5 lakh to go up to 8 lakh from the early hours of Wednesday onwards.

Authorities say that in last year's flood season, nearly 4,000 tmc ft of water was discharged into the sea from the barrage.

Up to three tmc ft of water can be stored in the pond at the barrage. Nearly 200 to 300 tmc ft of water can be utilised for cultivation of crops by releasing water through distributary canals — eastern, western and central delta canals — in Godavari district.

Godavari river conservator R. Mohana Rao said, "Normally, the flood season ends by the end of August and we are not expecting further floods to the river except a rise in water levels at the barrage in the next few days following rainfall in its catchment areas."

Though critics flayed the government for the inordinate delay in the execution of Polavaram irrigation project for varied reasons, its completion will help save only 354 tmc ft of water as it can store just 194 tmc ft while both the left main canal and right main canal of the project can carry 80 tmc ft of water, each helping cultivation of crops in about 7.20 lakh acres. No major reservoirs have been planned along both the canals for water storage in case the river witnesses floods and the need arises to store water.

Meanwhile, as flood water submerged all approach roads to the Polavaram project, work has been temporarily stopped and the authorities are making efforts to restore approach roads.

Polavaram project chief engineer B. Sudhakar Babu said, "Once the floodwater recedes at the project area, we will resume work. We are also trying to get workers from Chhattisgarh, Odisha and other areas back to work as some of them went away due to the pandemic. As these workers are capable enough to work even at a height of 52 metres, we are making efforts to bring them back to work as other workers cannot work at such a height at the project."

Rush hourA student runs to the exam centre for writing the JEE at Kundavari Kandrika in Vijayawada on Tuesday.
— C. NARAYANA RAO**JEE exams held at 52 centres**DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

The first exam in the pandemic, the JEE mains, began, strictly following Covid-19 protocol in AP on Tuesday.

It was conducted peacefully on the first day in 52 centres. The students submitted a self-declaration about their health condition. As many as 82,748 candidates applied for the JEE main exams in 52 centres. Covid-19 positive found students wrote the exam in separate rooms in the exam centres.

The architecture and planning exams were conducted on the first day and candidates in limited numbers attended. The JEE exams will continue till September 6 and most students make their own arrangements to reach the exam centres.

The students said that the papers were not very tough though most were not sure they would be conducted and could not prepare

well. They said that some students made good use of the lockdown to prepare via online coaching but students who used to depend on coaching centres faced trouble.

The exam centres started allowing the candidates from 7.30 am after a thorough thermal scanner checking and masks and gloves were provided. The details of exam centres were mismatched for several students who faced a lot of trouble, reaching at the last minute. As many as 10 candidates came to a JEE main exam centre at Payakapuram in Vijayawada. After thorough checking of lists, the organisers informed that their exam centre was at Patamata located 10 kms away and asked them to go there.

A parent, Voleti Ravi, said that most parents are forced to arrange their own transport due to the absence of public transport system mainly buses.

Cop suspended for dereliction of dutiesDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, SEPT. 1

Alleging that he was transferred unceremoniously, a head constable V. Subba Rao working as a writer in the traffic police station in Ongole. He staged a protest before the Collectorate in Ongole on Tuesday.

The constable is one among 29 police officers transferred by Prakasam SP Siddharth Kaushal three days back for corruption and dereliction of duties. However, Subba Rao alleged that he was transferred without any inquiry on the

CASE BOOKED AGAINST A 45-YR-OLD MAN FOR MOLESTING A MINOR GIRLDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, SEPT. 1

in ducks business. According to Singarayakonda Circle Inspector U. Srinivasulu, parents of the girl kept her in the house of Yugandhar as domestic help about six months back.

The parents approached the police after they came to know that Yugandhar was molesting her after the girl narrated her plight when she returned home after she fell sick a few days back.

The CI said that they had sent the girl for a medical examination.

94 PER CENT BENEFICIARIES GET SOCIAL SECURITY PENSIONS ON DAYDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, SEP. 1

sions to the beneficiaries at their doorstep on the first day of the month. Till 5 pm, pensions were distributed to 4,86,646 out of 5,14,093 beneficiaries in the district.

The volunteers had used a photo identification method instead of the biometric system, to prevent the virus spread.

In a statement, the district collector, Dr Narayan Bharat Gupta said that braving the pandemic, the volunteers distributed pen-

LOCKDOWN CURBS EASED IN TEMPLE CITYDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, SEP. 1

ical party meetings by confining the number of participants below 100, but they have to obtain prior permission from the local police authorities.

The Commissioner added that all the public parks, which remained closed for the past four months, will be reopened from Wednesday onwards. The public can visit the parks between 5 and 10 am and 5 pm and 8 pm.

In a release, the Municipal Commissioner P.S. Girisha informed that as per the new guidelines, all kinds of businesses in the city could run up to 9 pm in the night. People can organise events, functions, weddings or politi-

MOTHER, SON KILLED IN ROAD ACCIDENTDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, SEPT. 1

In a tragic incident, a mother and her son were killed on the spot when a speeding car hit their motorcycle on the Kanigiri Highway Road near Gopalapuram village in Pamuru mandal of Prakasam district on Tuesday.

TUDA to speed up approvals to raise revenueAVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEP. 1

Apart from completing the master plan works in urban and rural areas, the Tirupati Urban Development Authority (TUDA) plans to focus on revenue generation, mainly through approval of plans pending for the past few months.

In a recent meeting, TUDA directors and officials met under the chairmanship of Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy and decided to expedite the process of clearing the pending applications for building plan approvals in order to generate more funds needed for the development of the existing and new urban and rural mandals.

"We are planning to raise revenue by cutting delay in according approvals to building and layout plans. We are expecting to increase revenue in excess of ₹3 crore. We are also tapping other revenue sources to meet development expenditure of expanding city with merger of more mandals like Puttur, Srikalahasti, Satyavedu and Nagar, besides Sri City cluster," a senior official said.

Efforts on to bring down Covid death rate: Health secretaryDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

Special chief secretary (Health) K.S. Jawahar Reddy stated that they were making all efforts to bring down the death rate among Covid-19 patients even as nearly 10,000 new positive cases were being reported per day in the state.

He told media persons here on Tuesday that since the first suspected case was reported on March 2, they had not

slackened their efforts to save the lives of Coronavirus patients.

They were identifying patients with severe symptoms and providing them treatment in the nearby hospitals. If the problem was severe, they were being shifted to Covid hospitals for better

treatment, he said adding that while in the first two weeks of August, the number of cases rose to 1.30 lakh, in the second half of the month, 1.38 lakh cases were registered indicating that the rise in infections was 6.62 per cent.

Anantapur, Kurnool, Krishna and Vizianagaram were attending to Covid-19 patients. According him, 217 hospitals have set up help desks and display boards to give information on availability of beds.

Addressing the occa-

cies, said Mr Jawahar Reddy.

He claimed that the death rate was low in the state compared to other states.

He said that so far the 104 call centre received 14,916 calls and resolved 14,399 of them and 221 hospitals were attending to Covid-19 patients.

According him, 217 hospitals have set up help desks and display boards to give information on availability of beds.

Under the CPS, the governments do not contribute their share in the pension on par with the contribution made by the employees,

He said employees work as a bridge between the government and the people, have worked with a lot of dedication and deserve decent pensions.

Under the CPS, the governments do not contribute their share in the pension on par with the contribution made by the employees, he said. Suryanarayana, adding that the pension amount is deposited into mutual funds under the CPS. He questioned the future of the employees if the

does not give security to retired employees and it was a unilateral decision taken by the rulers those days.

He said employees work as a bridge between the government and the people, have worked with a lot of dedication and deserve decent pensions.

Demanding that Jagannath cancel the CPS before the Vijaya Dasami festival and bring relief to the lives of employees as he promised before the elections, Suryanarayana termed the CPS a dark decision stating that it

mutual fund companies become bankrupt.

In a separate programme, APNGOA state president, N. Chandrasekhar Reddy and general secretary, B. Srinivas Rao, and others employees staged a protest during lunch hour in the panchayat raj office in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

The leaders lamented that the government had appointed a committee to study impact of CPS and the feasibility of a revision to the OPS but sadly the committee did not submit its report. They sought the cancellation of the CPS.

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SHORT TAKES

19 KG OF TUSKS SEIZED IN KEONJHAR

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 1

The allegation by animal lovers that Odisha is a happy hunting ground for elephant poachers has once again received credence as the state forest department officials on Monday night seized around 19 kg of elephant tusks from a car near Bayapita village in Keonjhar district.

Three persons, all ivory traders, were arrested in this connection.

According to reports, the officials, acting on a tip off about the smuggling of the tusks in the car, chased the vehicle and intercepted it near Bayapita village.

On searching the car, the tusks were recovered. The accused were being questioned to ascertain the possible involvement of others in the offence.

According to Dr Biswajit Mohanty, an eminent wildlife activist, poachers are indulging in mindless killing of tuskers in the state to extract their teeth.

"Despite Odisha being criticised for the rising number of elephant deaths, the state forest department has not been able to crack down the poachers and traders. Unless the state government wakes up to nail the poachers, the elephant population here will cease to exist," said Dr Mohanty.

SENA WELCOMES AMBEDKAR'S TEMPLE DEMAND

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, SEPT. 1

A day after VBA chief Prakash Ambedkar visited Lord Vitthal temple in Pandharpur as part of a protest seeking its reopening, the Shiv Sena on Tuesday cryptically said his procession must be "welcomed" if it is heading in the direction of Hindutva. Ambedkar on Monday led the protest of scores of Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) workers at Pandharpur in Solapur district, seeking reopening of the temple which has been shut due to Covid-19 restrictions.

During his visit to the temple, he had applied *bukka* (a fragrant black powder) and sandalwood powder on his forehead, as Warkaris (devotees of Lord Vitthal) do.

Latching onto it, the Shiv Sena in an editorial in party mouthpiece 'Saamana' said, "In a way, he took the saffron pataka (flag) on his shoulder. The new procession of Advocate Ambedkar and his VBA must be welcomed if they are heading in the direction of Hindutva."

The ruling Shiv Sena in Maharashtra noted that the BJP last week staged a protest, demanding reopening of temples in the state, while Ambedkar did so on Monday. It is pure coincidence that the two demonstrations are being linked.

JEE MAINS HELD AMID STRINGENT PRECAUTIONS

New Delhi, Sept. 1: The Joint Entrance Exam (JEE)-Mains for admission to engineering colleges began on Tuesday amid stringent precautions and social distancing measures in view of Covid-19 pandemic.

Staggered entry and exit for candidates, sanitisers at the gate, distribution of masks and maintaining social distancing as candidates queued up, were among the scenes witnessed at the exam centres across the country.

The exam which has been postponed twice in view of Covid-19 pandemic is scheduled from September 1 to 6.

"Hand sanitiser are being made available at the entrance of the examination centre and inside the exam hall at all times. The usual process of checking the admit cards of candidates has been replaced with barcode readers, which have been made available to the examination centre authorities," said an official of the National Testing Agency (NTA).

"While all the candidates are asked to go to the exam centres with masks and sanitisers, once they enter the centre, they have to use the masks provided by the examination authority. Each candidate will be offered a 3-ply mask at the time of entry and expected to wear the same during the examination in order to avoid any form of unfair means at the time of examination," the official added.

ARMY HITS UPON 'HUGE' ARMS CACHE ALONG LoC

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 1

The Army on Tuesday claimed that its troops defending the Line of Control (LoC) hit upon 'a huge cache of arms and ammunition' left behind by a group of infiltrators in secreted locations in Rampur sector of Uri belt in north-western Baramulla district.

It said that, after being challenged by alert troops, the infiltrators moved back into Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Separately, the Border Security Force (BSF) and J&K police said that they during a joint operation carried out in Shiendara Top and Khanater Top villages in the hills of Poonch district of Jammu region, recovered two pistols with four magazines and 150 rounds of live ammunition, five AK-47 magazines and 250 bullets, two wireless sets, four grenades and a Binocular from a militant hideout.

Defence spokesman, Colonel Rajesh Kalia, said here that the Army troops detected movement of suspicious persons in a forward area in Rampur sector on August 30. "The movement was from a village close to the LoC and the suspects crossed into Indian territory. Due to terrain of thick foliage and weather conditions an alert of likely infiltration attempt was sounded," he said.

He added, "The surveillance grid was beefed up all across the area and along the likely infiltration routes and ambushes were sited to thwart any attempt of infiltration. Surveillance continued throughout the night".

The spokesman said that at first light on Monday, the troops carried a search of the area which continued for seven hours and that it was when two "concealed locations" in two "hideouts" were discovered.

"From these hideouts five AK series rifles along with six magazines and two sealed boxes of 1,254 rounds of AK ammunition, six pistols with nine magazines and six rounds, 21 grenades, 2 UBGL grenades and 2 Kenwood radio sets with one antenna were recovered," he said.

The Army said that the area has villages ahead of the anti-infiltration fence and claimed that the suspected modus operandi is to drop war-like stores in caches near the LoC.



Seven family members of late Pranab Mukherjee perform rituals during the funeral of the former president, at Lodhi Road cremation ground in New Delhi on Tuesday. Former President's son Abhijit, a parliamentarian, said he plans to convert one floor of their house in West Bengal's Jangipur into a museum-cum-library in the memory of the departed leader. - PTI

SC: ONLY PURE MILK TO BE USED FOR JYOTIRLINGA

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
Bhopal, Sept. 1

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the authorities of the famed Mahakaleswar temple in Ujjain to take measures to preserve the Jyotirlingam, the symbol of the presiding deity of the 18th century shrine, from erosion and decay.

Taking suo moto cognizance of the matter, the bench of Justice Arun Mishra listed out measures to be undertaken by the temple for preservation of the Jyotirlingam.

"The Supreme Court ordered to take measures to protect the Jyotirlingam. The court has made 4-5 recommendations for the purpose. We are waiting for the hard copy of the judgment", Ujjain district collector Ashish Singh, who is chairman of the management committee of the shrine, said.

Use of pure milk while performing the ritualistic offerings to the Jyotirlingam was one of the key points made in the order by the apex court for its preservation, an official of the temple administration told this newspaper.

Besides, the court ordered to shun the practice of treating the Jyotirlingam with 'panchamrutha', made of milk, ghee, liquid jaggery and honey.

The court observed that only pure milk should be allowed to pour over the Jyotirlingam as offerings.

POWERFUL NAGALAND GB FEDERATION WRITES TO PM

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, SEPT. 1

A massive polarisation has started in Nagaland where almost all the tribal bodies in tune with sentiments of civil society have started mounting pressure for an early Naga peace accord - either with or without NSCN (I-M).

This was more visible on Tuesday when one of the most powerful, the Nagaland GB (Gaon Burahs) Federation wrote a hard-hitting letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi pleading for a political solution for Nagaland at earliest.

The letter of Nagaland GB Federation has come close on the heels of a mega political initiative of opposition Nagaland Peoples Front (NPF) led by former chief minister T.R. Zeliang who had a consultative meeting with NSCN (I-M) led by its chairman Q. Tuccu on Monday and urged NSCN (I-M) to be more accommodative with other Naga political groups, while assuring the NSCN (I-M) of continuing to play the role of an active facilitator in the ongoing political dialogue for reaching a final settlement on the Naga political issues.

The NPF which has formed Political Affairs Mission (PAM) to act as facilitator in Naga peace talks has not only raised serious question over the role of Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Rio, known for his proximity with NSCN (I-M) leader Th Muivah but the opposition has also decided to rope in the working committee of Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) for consultation to conclude the Naga peace-process at the earliest.

The Nagaland GB federation which is considered as to be the custodians of the Naga customary laws, traditions and practices in its letter to Prime Minister said, "The solution of Naga political issue has to incorporate the aspirations of the people rather than the dictated lines of leadership or their ulterior motive for a dictatorial reign."

HC quashes Kafeel Khan's illegal detention under NSA

Court says Aligarh DM did a 'selective reading' of his speech at the AMU

Allahabad, Sept. 1: The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday quashed the detention of Dr Kafeel Khan under the National Security Act and ordered his immediate release, saying the Aligarh district magistrate did a "selective reading" of his speech at the AMU.

The bench comprising Chief Justice Govind Marhar and Justice Saumitra Dayal Singh allowed the writ petition filed by Khan's mother Nuzhat Parveen and said the order for his detention passed by the district magistrate is illegal.

The petition argued that Khan was granted bail in February by a competent court and he was supposed to be released on bail. However, he was not released for four days and the National Security Act (NSA) was subsequently invoked against him. Hence, his detention was illegal.

"From these hideouts five AK series rifles along with six magazines and two sealed boxes of 1,254 rounds of AK ammunition, six pistols with nine magazines and six rounds, 21 grenades, 2 UBGL grenades and 2 Kenwood radio sets with one antenna were recovered," he said.

Khan has been in jail since January after he delivered the allegedly provocative speech at the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) during the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests in December last year. He is lodged in Mathura jail. Under the NSA, a person can be detained without a charge for up to 12 months if

authorities are satisfied that he or she is a threat to national security or law and order.

Quashing Khan's detention order, the court said, "A complete reading of the speech prima facie does not disclose any effort to promote hatred or violence. It also nowhere threatens peace and tranquility of the city of Aligarh. The address gives a call for national integrity and unity among the citizens. The speech also deprecates any kind of violence. It appears that the District Magistrate had selective reading and selective mention for few phrases from the speech ignoring its true intent."

The court further said in the instant case, the "causal link is found to be missing or completely broken".

In absence of any material indicating that the detainee continued to act in a manner prejudicial to public order from December 12, 2019 up to

February 13, 2020 or that he committed any such other or further act as may have had that effect, the preventive detention order cannot be sustained," it said.

"In fact, the grounds of detention are silent as to public order at Aligarh being at risk of any prejudice in February 2020 on account of the offending act attributed to the detainee on the date December 12, 2019," the court said in its order.

"What remains is a mere apprehension expressed by the detaining authority without supporting material on which such apprehension may be founded," it said.

The court said it had also tested the legality of the causal link is found to be missing or completely broken.

"The grounds for detention along with material were supplied to the detainee in light of clause (5) of Article 22 of the

Constitution of India enabling him to submit representation to the competent authorities at earliest," it said.

"The material so given was a compact disk of the speech delivered by Dr. Kafeel Khan on 12th December, 2019 at Bab-e-Syd gate of Aligarh Muslim University," it said.

"On asking, it is conveyed to us that no transcript of the speech was supplied to the detainee. The non-supply of transcript would have been of no consequence, if a device would have been supplied to the detainee to play the compact disk. It is the position admitted that no such device was made available to the detainee," it added.

"One more important aspect of the matter is that the orders of extension of detention were never served upon the detainee, it said.

In August, the Uttar Pradesh government had extended Khan's detention under the NSA by a period of three months.

In an order dated August 4, the Home Department said the NSA was invoked against Khan on February 13, 2020, on the orders of the Aligarh district magistrate. The court said the record shown to us and the pleadings of the petition also refer that only radiograms relating to decision of the State Government for extension of the term of detention were supplied to the detainee at earliest.

"The radiograms mention that the actual order shall be sent through speed post but in fact nothing except the radiograms

were given to the detainee. In light of the discussion above, we are having no hesitation in concluding that neither detention of Dr. Kafeel Khan under National Security Act, 1980 nor extension of the detention are sustainable in the eye of law," it said.

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In August, the Uttar Pradesh government had extended Khan's detention under the NSA by a period of three months.

In an order dated August 4, the Home Department said the NSA was invoked against Khan on February 13, 2020, on the orders of the Aligarh district magistrate. After this, the matter was sent to the advisory council, which, in its report, said there are "enough reasons" to keep Khan in jail. - PTI

Riots: Pinjra Tod member gets bail

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 1

The Delhi high court on Tuesday granted bail to Pinjra Tod member Devangana Kalita in a Northeast Delhi violence case, saying the police failed to show that she had instigated women of a particular community or delivered a hate speech.

In his 21-page judgment, Justice Suresh Kumar Kait said that her pres-

ence is seen in a "peaceful agitation", which is a fundamental right guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution of India. Kalita, a member of the women's collective Pinjra Tod, was arrested in May.

The court noted that the agitation, held against the CAA, had been going on for a long time with print and electronic media present throughout, in addition to the cameras of the police department, but

there is no evidence which establishes that the alleged offence took place on Kalita's action. The evidence produced constituted statements recorded much belatedly under Section 164 of the CrPC, though the witnesses remained present at the spot throughout, the court observed.

"Chargesheet has already been filed against the petitioner on June 2. Moreover, I have gone through the inner case diary pro-

duced in a sealed cover along with pen drive and found that though her presence is seen in peaceful agitation, which is fundamental right guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution, (the police, prosecution) had failed to produce any material to show Kalita had instigated women of a particular community or gave hatred speech due to which the life of a young man was sacrificed," Justice Kait said.

The court also noted that the process of issuance will be further accelerated and the issuance will be monitored to ensure that propensity is brought down to the lowest.

Mr Kansal said that possessing domicile under the new law is the basic eligibility condition for appointment to any post under the UT of J&K following amendments in the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralization and Recruitment) Act, 2010.

He, however, reassured on behalf of the government that the rules provide a simple and time bound procedure for the issuance of the domicile certificate "so that no one is put to any inconvenience, besides there are provisions for time bound issuance for certificates including an appellate authority whose orders will be binding as well as who has revisional powers".

The spokesman further added that the rules have a provision that applications for grant of domicile certificate can be submitted either physically or electronically online and that the competent authority can also issue domicile certificate(s) electronically.

RAHUL, PRIYANKA HIT OUT AT CENTRE FOR HUGE SLUMP IN GROWTH

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 1

Attacking the Centre over the slump in GDP, the Congress on Tuesday said that the economy was ruined from the day demonetisation was announced and it continued after the Modi government introduced one erroneous policy after another," former Congress president Rahul Gandhi tweeted on Tuesday.

Congress leader and general secretary in-charge of Uttar Pradesh, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, too accused the government of being responsible for the slump in the economy.

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 1

The Jammu and Kashmir authorities have issued as many as 12.5 lakh domicile certificates under a new law, the introduction of which earlier this year had raised fears of the beginning of demographic changes in predominantly Muslim (erstwhile) state.

However, allaying these fears, a senior government official said here on Tuesday that the new domicile certificates were issued to those residents of Jammu and Kashmir who were already holding state subject certificates under a 1927 law (including Kashmiri Pandit migrants).

The new domicile cer-

tificate is for applying for jobs in J&K. It does not confer right to buy land," Principal Secretary Revenue, Pawan Kotwal, told reporters.

He also said that those holding domicile certificates would not be included in the voters' list in the Union Territory either.

Earlier government spokesman Rohit Kansal sought to clarify that 99 percent of new domicile certificates were issued to those residents of Jammu and Kashmir who were not permanent residents of the state include 11,398 refugees from erstwhile West Pakistan, 415 members of Valmiki Samaj (sweepers) and 10 of those

belonging to Gorkha community besides 12,340 registered migrants.

Asserting the government has accelerated the issuance of domicile certificates, he said, "The process of issuance of domicile certificates is picking up rapidly and certificate issuance is being monitored regularly".

IN BRIEF

10 guards hostage in Guatemalan jail

Guatemala City: Imprisoned Guatemalan gang members took 10 guards hostage Monday after prison system authorities moved some gang leaders to another lockup. Interior Minister Olivero García Rosas dismissed gang demands that the Barrios 18 gang leaders be returned for the guards to be released at the prison known as "Little Hell". He said authorities had control outside the prison. Early Monday, prison authorities had transferred some gang members who made up the inmate leadership. "It was an operation organised to break up the gangs," García said. "If the use of force becomes necessary, force will have to be used." In an audio recording sent to reporters, someone saying he was a guard held hostage said the gang members wanted a peaceful dialogue to make sure their leaders weren't sent to two prisons.

Earthquake hits northern Chile

Santiago: A magnitude 6.8 earthquake struck near the coast of Northern Chile on Tuesday, the GFZ German Research Center for Geosciences said, and some damage and minor landslides were reported in areas near the epicentre, according to local media. A number of people living near the coast were evacuated as a precaution, according to BNO News. There were no reports of casualties. GFZ reported aftershocks of around magnitudes 6.2 and 5.5. There was no tsunami threat from the earthquake, according to the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre.

GFZ earlier showed the magnitude as 7, with the quake at a depth of 10 km (6.2 miles). Chile is on the Pacific Ring of Fire, an arc of fault lines circling the Pacific Basin which is prone to frequent earthquakes. In June, a magnitude 6.8 earthquake had struck Chile's mineral-rich northern desert. Damage in that quake was minimal.

Japan typhoon heads to Koreas

Tokyo: A powerful typhoon blew over Japan's southernmost islands on Tuesday and was headed toward the country's main southern island and the Korean Peninsula. More than 20,000 homes were left without electricity, according to Okinawa Electric Power Co. As of noon, Typhoon Maysak had already traveled past the area around Okinawa, home to US military bases, but warnings continued to be issued about strong gusts that could cause homes to collapse. Extremely high tides were a risk as well. The Japanese Meteorological Agency had said earlier that Maysak was expected to later make landfall on Kyushu, Japan's main southern island, but its course appeared to be swerving away. Still, it's passing close by could bring strong winds and rain. The storm is on course to hit South Korea by Thursday. A typhoon that hit the Korean Peninsula last week caused scattered minor damage in both Koreas.

TALIBAN HIT MILITARY BASE, KILL 3

Kabul: Sept. 1: Taliban insurgents launched a complex attack on Tuesday morning against a military base in eastern Afghanistan, killing at least three public protection forces, an official said.

Five other forces were wounded in the attack, said Abdul Rahman Mangal, a spokesman for the governor in Paktia province of the country.

A suicide car bomber targeted the entrance gate of the base in the provincial capital Gardez then two gunmen started shooting at the Afghan security forces, Mangal said.

Security forces killed both attackers in a gunbattle lasting almost 10 minutes and the area is now under control, he added.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said the group claimed responsibility for the attack in Gardez.

The attack comes after Afghanistan's president appointed 46 members to a council for national reconciliation, which will have final say on whether the government will sign a peace deal with the Taliban after what are expected to be protracted and uncertain negotiations with the insurgents.

The negotiations were envisaged under a US-Taliban peace agreement signed in February as intra-Afghan talks to decide the country's future.

Israeli knee on Palestinian neck



Israeli soldiers detain a Palestinian protester during a demonstration against the Israeli settlement expansion in the village of Shufah, southeast of Tulkarm in the occupied West Bank, on Tuesday. — AFP

Outrage as cops shoot, kill another PoC in LA

HOUSE TO SUBPOENA POSTMASTER GENERAL OVER MAIL DISRUPTIONS

Washington, Sept. 1: The House Oversight Committee intends to subpoena Postmaster General Louis DeJoy for documents about disruptions in mail delivery operations that are now central to questions over the ability to handle an onslaught of mail-in ballots expected for the November poll.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., the committee chair, sent a memo Monday saying DeJoy blew past last week's deadline to

fully respond to the committee's request for more information. He has not provided any new materials, she said. "It is clear that a subpoena has become necessary to further the Committee's investigation and help inform potential legislative actions," she said.

Democrats are aggressively pursuing oversight of postal operations after President Donald Trump railed against mail-in ballots. — AP

WORKING FOR TRUMPS A 'MISTAKE', SAYS EX-ADVISER TO FIRST LADY

Washington, Sept. 1: A former friend and adviser of Melania Trump says it was "the worst mistake of my life" to work for President Donald Trump and his family, lashing out at the first lady for not defending her over questions about costs for the presidential inauguration she helped produce.

Stephanie Winston Woloff was an unpaid White House adviser to the first lady until February 2018, when her contract was te-

rminated as questions about inaugural spending arose. "When it really counted, Melania wasn't there for me," Woloff writes in "Melania and Me: The Rise and Fall of My Friendship with the First Lady," to be published Tuesday. "She wasn't really my friend. In fact, I wish I had never met her." Woloff said. Woloff, a New York-based event planner, said the pair first met in 2003 in the hallways of *Vogue* magazine. — AP

us all," a woman told a CBS News reporter in tears. "Why are you all here?" Who are you protecting? The latest murder came as US President Donald Trump headed to Kenosha, Wisconsin on Tuesday, where police shot PoC father Jacob Blake seven times in the back on August 23, leaving

him paralysed from the waist down.

Blake's shooting sparked further grief and protests three months after George Floyd suffocated below the knee of a white policeman in Minneapolis in May, paving the way for the most widespread civil unrest in the US since the 1960s. — Agencies

Detentions resume in Belarus

Moscow, Sept. 1: Belarusian authorities on Tuesday resumed detaining protesters in the capital, Minsk, where students took to the streets demanding the resignation of the country's authoritarian leader after an election the opposition denounced as rigged.

Several dozen students on Tuesday held pickets outside their universities and marched through the

city centre on the fourth week of mass protests rocking the country. Belarusian media reported that at least 18 students were detained as police moved to break up the crowd. President Alexander Lukashenko has dismissed the protesters as Western puppets and bristled at the demands for him to step down after 26 years in power or start a dialogue with the opposition.

On Tuesday, people start-

ed gathering near several large plants in support of the striking workers. Belarusian prosecutors have opened a criminal probe against the opposition Coordination Council, accusing its members of undermining the country's security. Last week, the country's courts handed 10-day jail sentences to two council members and summoned several others for questioning. — AP

to be included in order to make the process more open and democratic. Whoever is chosen will fill in for the rest of Abe's term, until September 2021. The next prime minister will face a number of challenges, including the ongoing fight against Covid-19, managing the Tokyo Olympics that has been postponed to next summer; setting Japan's security policy in the face of an increasingly assertive China, and dealing with the results of the presidential election in the US, Japan's key ally.

Some younger lawmakers had called for the latter

dates, who have either announced their intention to run or are expected to do so: Yoshihide Suga, Japan's top government spokesman and Abe's longtime right-hand man, the 71-year-old Suga has emerged as the favourite among ruling party heavyweights.

Suga has been pegged by the party secretary general as the best caretaker who can ensure the continuation of Abe's policies. The son of a farmer in the northern prefecture of Akita, Suga is a self-made politician, rare in Japan's largely hereditary world of politics. As chief cabinet

secretary, Suga is a policy coordinator and advisor to Abe. He is also the public face of Abe's government, doing twice-daily televised media briefings. He's become known as "Uncle Reiwa" after he was tasked with unveiling the new imperial era name for Emperor Naruhito last year.

Suga has been a loyal supporter of Abe since his first stint as prime minister from 2006-2007 and helped his return to power in 2012. Suga had previously denied that he would run, but on Monday simply said he would not comment.

Fumio Kishida: Abe's fo-

Tug leaving wreck sinks, 3 sailors die

It was responding to Mauritius oil spill

Johannesburg, Sept. 1:

The oil spill disaster off Mauritius turned deadly this week when a tugboat leaving the shipwreck collided with a barge and sank, killing at least three sailors, police said Tuesday. The tug was towing the empty barge from the stranded hull of the Japanese ship, the MV Wakashio, on Monday night when heavy seas rammed the barge into the tug. It sank off the northeast coast of the Indian Ocean island nation, near a village called Poudre D'or.

Four sailors were rescued and one is missing, said Mauritius police constable Jordan Jason Sunasy. "It is a terrible twist in this disaster," environmental consultant Pravind Jugnauth is under pressure to explain why immediate action was not taken when the ship first ran aground.

More than 1,000 tonnes of fuel spilled into the coastal waters. About 3,000 tonnes remained on the boat and was pumped into barges before the Wakashio broke in two several days later. Thousands of civilian volunteers created makeshift oil barriers by stuffing fabric tubes with sugar cane leaves and using empty plastic bottles to

keep them afloat.

Environmental workers carefully ferried dozens of baby tortoises and rare plants to shore, plucking some trapped seabirds out of the goo. Dead dolphins began washing up on the coast last week. So far 47 dolphins and three whales have been found, Dowarkasing said.

An initial autopsy by a government laboratory said oil was not the cause of the deaths, but few Mauritians believe that, Dowarkasing said. The government of Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth is under pressure to explain why immediate action was not taken when the ship first ran aground.

He has blamed bad weather for the government's apparent inaction. Tens of thousands of people marched in the capital on Saturday in protest, calling on top officials to step down. The ship's captain and first officer have been arrested and charged with "endangering safe navigation", and several investigations are underway. — AP

Mass testing for virus in HK amid public doubts

Hong Kong, Sept. 1:

Hong Kong tested thousands of people for Coronavirus on Tuesday at the start of a mass-testing effort that's become another political flash point in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory. Volunteers stood in lines at some of the more than 100 testing centres, though many residents are distrustful over the resources and staff being provided by China's central government and some have expressed fear DNA could be collected.

The Hong Kong government has dismissed such concerns, and leader Carrie Lam urged the public to see the programme in a fair and objective light.

Children in Wuhan return to school

Beijing, Sept. 1: Children returned to school Tuesday in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, the original epicentre of the Coronavirus epidemic that underwent months of lockdown but which has not seen new cases of

local transmission for weeks.

It's class time again across Europe.

Paris, Sept. 1: Tugging on their masks or dashing to hug long-unseen friends, millions of children returned to school across Europe and beyond Tuesday in a mass experiment aimed at bridging inequalities and resuscitating economies — despite the persistent pandemic. — AP

Graft charges: Saudi Arabia sacks 2 royals

Riyadh, Sept. 1: A top

Saudi military commander and his son were sacked on Monday over graft allegations, state media said, in the government's latest anti-corruption purge.

Joint forces commander Prince Fahad bin Turki — a senior royal family member — and Abdulaziz bin Fahad, the deputy emir of northern Al-Jouf region, were fired and placed under investigation for corruption, according to Monday.

Several other officers and civilian employees of the defence ministry were also being probed for corruption, it added, citing a royal decree from King Salman. Prince Fahad served as the commander of the Saudi-led military coalition fighting Iran-linked Houthi rebels in neighbouring Yemen.

He was replaced by Muqtada bin Salim, the deputy chief of staff, on the recommendation of the kingdom's de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed. — AP

bin Salman, state media said. The government decision to sack the commander was a "very public signal against corruption in the military", said Saudi author and analyst Ali Shihabi.

The announcement marks the latest government crackdown on what officials describe as endemic corruption in the kingdom. Senior Saudi security commanders were among a string of officials sacked last month over graft allegations at tourism projects.

In March, Human Rights Watch voiced alarm over the arrest of 298 Saudi officials over corruption allegations, warning of possible "unfair legal proceedings" in an opaque judicial system.

Military and judicial officials were among those arrested over allegations of bribery and embezzlement amounting to a total of 379 million riyals (\$101 million), according to the state anti-corruption watchdog. — AP

Justice Aamer Farooq remarked that the court wanted to give an opportunity to the former prime minister to surrender and appear before being declared absconder. Justice Aamer Farooq remarked that the court would initiate the process to declare Nawaz Sharif as absconder if he failed to present himself before court till next date. A division bench comprising Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhter Kiyani conducted hearing on a case seeking exemption from hearing for Nawaz Sharif on medical grounds in appeals pertaining to graft references.

Haris pleaded that his client could still challenge the Punjab government's decision for rejecting extension of Nawaz's bail despite the summons of this court. To this Justice Farooq said that the court was not depriving the accused from his legal rights.

PAK COURT TO INDICT ZARDARI ON SEPT. 9

Islamabad, Sept. 1: A Pakistani accountability court on Tuesday fixed date for indictments of former president Asif Ali Zardari, his sister Faryal Talpur and Omni Group's Abdul Ghani Majeed in the mega money laundering case. The AC Judge Muhammad Azam Khan conducted hearing of the case and summoned the suspects on September 9 for indictments.

Party manoeuvres to pick Japan's next PM

Tokyo, Sept. 1: With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announcing his plans to step down due to health reasons, members of his ruling party are furiously maneuvering ahead of an internal vote that will ultimately decide his successor. Executives of Abe's ruling Liberal Democratic Party met Tuesday and decided that the September 14 vote for party leader — and with it almost assuredly prime minister — will be limited to lawmakers and not broader members of the party. Some younger lawmakers had called for the latter to be included in order to make the process more open and democratic. Whoever is chosen will fill in for the rest of Abe's term, until September 2021. The next prime minister will face a number of challenges, including the ongoing fight against Covid-19, managing the Tokyo Olympics that has been postponed to next summer; setting Japan's security policy in the face of an increasingly assertive China, and dealing with the results of the presidential election in the US, Japan's key ally. Here are the three candi-

dates, who have either announced their intention to run or are expected to do so: Yoshihide Suga, Japan's top government spokesman and Abe's longtime right-hand man, the 71-year-old Suga has emerged as the favourite among ruling party heavyweights.

Suga has been pegged by the party secretary general as the best caretaker who can ensure the continuation of Abe's policies. The son of a farmer in the northern prefecture of Akita, Suga is a self-made politician, rare in Japan's largely hereditary world of politics. As chief cabinet

secretary, Suga is a policy coordinator and advisor to Abe. He is also the public face of Abe's government, doing twice-daily televised media briefings. He's become known as "Uncle Reiwa" after he was tasked with unveiling the new imperial era name for Emperor Naruhito last year.

Suga has been a loyal supporter of Abe since his first stint as prime minister from 2006-2007 and helped his return to power in 2012. Suga had previously denied that he would run, but on Monday simply said he would not comment.

Fumio Kishida: Abe's fo-

reign minister from 2012-2017, the 63-year-old Kishida had once been considered the party's preferred choice to become the next prime minister. His status has slipped, however, after he was seen as fumbling some of the party's response to the Coronavirus in his role as policy chief. In formally announcing his candidacy Tuesday, Kishida said he would be a leader who listens to the voices of the people — something Abe has been criticised for not doing enough.

A low-key lawmaker from Hiroshima with somewhat dovish stance on

DECCAN Chronicle

2 SEPTEMBER 2020

Only long-term measures can resuscitate economy

Little over four years ago, then International Monetary Fund managing director Christine Lagarde billed India as a bright spot in the gloomy global economy. Notwithstanding the fact that the Indian economy shone majorly because of cheaper crude oil, all of us felt euphoric. Hearts swelled with pride and a sense of reinvention. Within the next year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched his googlies, demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax. Instead of launching the economy into a geostationary orbit of the global economy, the government's twin mistakes sent it into a free fall. The Covid-19 pandemic has finally taken the Indian economy to a journey of the netherworld. The government finally admitted that the economy had shrunk 23.4 per cent in the quarter ended on June 30 — the worst performing economy among the top 50 countries.

Does it mean an end to the economic growth story of India? Definitely not! The people of this country are smart enough to set right things. However, the journey of the Indian economy over the last four years — from being the bright spot in the global economy to the worst performer among 50 countries — gives a vivid commentary on the economic policy of the central government. The economic crisis during the UPA-2 government was attributed to policy paralysis. And if one were to pick one phrase to describe the economic failure under the current regime, it would be "impulsive policy". Be it demonetisation or the rollout of the GST or lockdown, the government went after headline-grabbing policies without adequate preparedness to handle the consequences of those decisions. The result is a big mess-up.

The lockdown was not per se a wrong decision. Several countries have effectively implemented the lockdown to control the Coronavirus pandemic. But implementing blindly what other foreign countries did without taking into consideration the uniqueness of India was wrong. Perhaps, top officials might not know that the majority of Indian families have hand-to-mouth existence. One wonders how the ministers, who grew up in middle-class backgrounds, could have forgotten this stark reality of India. How did the ministers expect that crores of such people remain locked in without money and food? Had the government transferred some cash to all families, the lockdown could have been successful. But the Narendra Modi government dithered in taking this step. With state elections on the horizon, the government did not stop guest workers from returning home. This fatal error helped the Coronavirus spread to smaller towns and rural India, making containment of the pandemic much more difficult and potentially pushing lakhs of people into poverty.

With large swathes of the economy, involving businesses such as hospitality, events, weddings, tourism, entertainment, travel in a virtual coma, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or the size of the economy cannot be expected to reach pre-Covid levels immediately. There is nothing that the government can do in the short term to resuscitate the economy. Two things that the government could do are: Not deploying smokescreens to make everything look hunky-dory, and adopting a transparent and consultative approach in framing the economic policy.

Bhushan's choice

It is no precedent in terms of redefining the law, nor is it an example of judicial statesmanship — an exercise that the respondent in the Supreme Court's 2020 suo motu contempt of court petition had prayed for before the court. But the much-publicised sentence of a ₹1 fine in menacing conjunction with the nasty threat — of a three-month jail sentence and disbarment — that failed to conceal or disguise the intent of intimidation nor the old-style, passive-aggressive conservatism of its writers — coming as it did in 82 thick leaves pursuant to a 108-page judgment — during a lockdown when thousands of urgent petitions desperately awaited their audience — nonetheless spells hope. It holds the promise that the citizen's right to free speech may yet emerge morally victorious. Should their view carry genuine weight, its opponents will blink, and expose themselves.

This is despite the fact that Mr Bhushan is a privileged man. None other than the attorney general of India spoke for him. His name carries influence in the bar association circles. As it transpired, the conclusion to the case was plain for what it was — a crafty manoeuvre by the bench — of Justices Arun Mishra, B.R. Gavai, and Krishna Murari — to beat a hasty retreat after biting of more than it could chew. Perhaps Justice Mishra and his brother judges had made an error of judgment in taking suo motu cognisance of contempt in response to advocate Mahek Maheshwari's petition in the first place. It is widely believed that Mr Bhushan, in fact, did a service to the judiciary by calling attention to his misgivings. This newspaper opined that the bench was in contempt of justice by pronouncing him guilty. And the bench went on to prove it right!

In sentencing Mr Bhushan to the token fine, the bench had aimed for the high moral ground. It ended up making a mockery of itself. There was much mirth over photos of Mr Bhushan's advocate, Rajeev Dhawan, comically presenting him a one-rupee coin, post the announcement. Kudos to Mr Bhushan for displaying grace under pressure, not giving in to the impulse for drama — of being seen braving imprisonment and discredit — but paying the fine cheerfully as he had promised to. He deserved the right to file a review petition. His next move remains unpredictable.

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quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	38,900.80
Nifty 50	11,470.25
S&P 500*	3,510.25
Dollar (₹)	72.87
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.88
Euro (₹)	87.30
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,963▲418
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.91
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.943 -0.135
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.718 0.025

* As of 9:30 PM IST

ONGC profit dips 92% on oil, gas price slump

ONGC reported 92 per cent slump in its June quarter net profit after oil prices halved and gas rates fell to a decade low. Standalone net profit of Rs 496 crore in April-June was 91.7 per cent lower than Rs 5,980 crore net profit a year back. Revenues dipped 51 per cent to Rs 13,011 crore. The surprise profit came after the public sector company delayed payment of cess on crude oil it produces.

Infosys to hire 12K US workers in two years



Infosys said it plans to hire 12,000 American workers over the next two years, taking its hiring commitment in the country to 25,000 over five years. In 2017, Infosys had committed to hiring 10,000 American workers over two years, and has created 13,000 jobs in the US to date. "Through this expanded commitment, Infosys will hire an additional 12,000 workers by 2022 across a variety of roles," it said.

Adani is world's largest solar asset owner

Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) said Mercom Capital has ranked it as the world's largest solar power generation asset owner in terms of operating, under-construction and awarded projects. AGEL's under-construction and awarded capacity stands at 10.1 GW, while its operational capacity is nearly 3 GW. Adani's renewable energy portfolio exceeds the total capacity installed by the entire US solar industry in 2019.

Honda launches new variants of City in India

Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL) launched two petrol variants of the fourth generation of its popular sedan Honda City with price starting at Rs 9.29 lakh, ex-showroom Delhi. The company, which recently launched an all-new 5th generation version of the Honda City sedan, said it will continue selling the 4th generation car in two variants SV and V grade with BS-VI compliant 1.5-litre petrol engine in manual transmission.



Mfg PMI bounces, but GST, diesel, e-way bills lag August signals possible recovery in September

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEP. 1

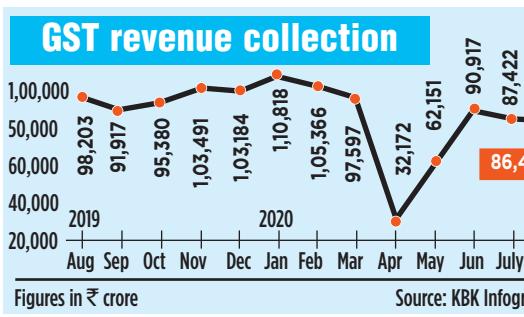
The industrial activity has rebounded in August as has been evident from the Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI). However, some of the other key indicators of industrial recovery, including diesel consumption, GST collections and e-way bills, were still moving sideways, indicating a possible recovery in September.

Manufacturing PMI released by IHS Markit in August has come in at 52, compared to 46 in July, signalling growth for the first time in five months since March. Production growth was largely driven by greater client demand for domestic goods following the resumption of business operations.

However, the decline in exports weighed slightly on overall new orders, as firms cited subdued demand conditions from abroad. Further, job shedding continues in August at a strong rate.

Supply chains were disrupted in August, with firms citing transportation restrictions and supplier delays. These supply chain issues and movement restrictions were reflecting in the fuel consumption patterns as well. Monthly diesel consumption continued to decline for the second month in August.

Diesel consumption accounts for 40 per cent of overall refined fuel sales and is one of the key parameters linked to over-



all economic growth.

PSU refiners sold 4.26 million tonnes of diesel in August, down 13 per cent from July and 22.3 per cent from a year earlier, data compiled by IOC showed. The e-way bills of August also show a marginal decline over July, reflecting the slower intra-state and inter-state traffic.

"If we look at the PMI and diesel data, we find that there has been an uptake in the purchase of inputs by industries, while the restrictions in transportation and the flooding in several parts of the country has affected the traffic of goods. Hopefully, we should see some recovery from September as the unlock process will support economic activity," said Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist, Barclays.

"But we will have to see the pace of recovery, which could be much slower to take the economy to nor-

up 82.75 points. Globally stocks surged higher on encouraging PMI (purchasing managers index) data across the globe. PMI number for August came in at - Euro (51.7 vs 51.8 for July), UK (55.2 vs 53.3 in July), Caixin China (53.1- highest since 2011 vs 52.8 in July), India (52 vs 46 in July), said HDFC Securities.

FPIs were net buyers of equities worth Rs 486.09 crore.

Grasim, which produces VSF in India, has been following a "discriminatory pricing" and MSME spinners have been bearing the brunt of it, says the Southern India Mills Association (Sima).

The current capacity of the domestic producer is not enough to meet the growing demands of the industry and hence the indigenous producer is adopting import parity pricing while selling the fibre to domestic spinners at a premium of Rs 20/kg, taking advantage of the anti-dumping duty. At the same time, Grasim is exporting the fibre to competing countries like Bangladesh, Turkey, Nepal, and Sri Lanka at international prices.

Further, the manufacturer has been adopting a complicated domestic pricing policy. It promises discounts to the tune of 40 per cent while withholding over one-third of it till



Textile industry wants skewed dumping duty on VSF to go

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEP. 1

Anti-dumping duty on viscose staple fibre (VSF) has hurt the textile industry badly while it benefited monopoly players. The industry now wants the government to end the dumping duty, which is forcing textile units to import spun yarn.

The budget carrier, which posted a record loss last quarter, is charging 20 ringgit (\$4.82) per passenger on counter check-ins for domestic flights and 30 ringgit for international trips, effective from Tuesday, it said.

AirAsia's chief operations officer Javed Malik said the move is aimed at encouraging customers to use the other check-in means and minimize physical contact between guests and staff. Fees will be waived for passengers with reduced mobility and premium travelers.

— Bloomberg

SKODA RAPID AUTOMATIC BOOKING OPENS AT ₹25K

MICHAEL GONCALVES
PUNE, SEP. 1

After launching the BS6 Skoda Rapid with a turbo-petrol engine and a manual gearbox earlier in May, the Czech automaker Skoda has opened its order books for the Skoda Rapid automatic sedan that is slated for a launch on September 18 when the price will be announced.

The Skoda Rapid will be on a more even footing with rivals like the Maruti Suzuki Ciaz, Toyota Yaris, Hyundai Verna and the new Honda City, all of which are available with their own varieties of automatic transmissions.

An overwhelming response from brand loyalists and auto enthusiasts from across the nation has obliged the Czech marque to push the yardstick further and introduce the convenience of an automatic transmission across the Rapid TSI range, at a very competitive price point," Zac Hollis, brand director at Skoda Auto India, said.

"We intend to crack down on bogus orders or stock manipulation with this new model," Lee said

the year-end, leading to the blockage of working capital. It links the discount to the incremental fibre consumption with a one-sided penalty clause and prevent sourcing from other suppliers with an annual contract, said Sima.

"Competition Commission of India in its order dated March 18, 2020, levied Grasim Industries a penalty of Rs 301.61 crore for abuse of dominant position in the market for supply of VSF to spinners in India," said Ashwin Chandran, chairman, Sima. When contacted by Financial Chronicle, Grasim spokesperson did not respond to the allegations by the power looms.

Due to the higher pricing of the fibre, the power loom sector has been increasingly importing yarn from overseas markets. The import of viscose spun yarn grew 27 times from 2,022 tonnes in 2016-17 to 56,262 tonnes in 2019-20.

Removing the anti-dumping duty on VSF will make the entire Indian VSF textile value chain globally competitive, said the Northern India Textiles Mills Association.

Both the associations want the duty to be removed on VSF.

On the other hand,

the current capacity of the domestic producer is not enough to meet the growing demands of the industry and hence the indigenous producer is adopting import parity pricing while selling the fibre to domestic spinners at a premium of Rs 20/kg, taking advantage of the anti-dumping duty. At the same time, Grasim is exporting the fibre to competing countries like Bangladesh, Turkey, Nepal, and Sri Lanka at international prices.

Further, the manufacturer has been adopting a complicated domestic pricing policy. It promises discounts to the tune of 40 per cent while withholding over one-third of it till

the year-end, leading to the blockage of working capital. It links the discount to the incremental fibre consumption with a one-sided penalty clause and prevent sourcing from other suppliers with an annual contract, said Sima.

"Competition Commission of India in its order dated March 18, 2020, levied Grasim Industries a penalty of Rs 301.61 crore for abuse of dominant position in the market for supply of VSF to spinners in India," said Ashwin Chandran, chairman, Sima. When contacted by Financial Chronicle, Grasim spokesperson did not respond to the allegations by the power looms.

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Rupee surges 75p, bonds prices up

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, SEP. 1

The rupee on Tuesday posted its biggest single intraday gain in nearly two years, appreciating by 75 paise, or 1.02 per cent, against the US dollar while bond yields fell to their lowest level in over two weeks following the Reserve Bank of India's measures to maintain financial system stability and encouraging manufacturing PMI data.

Global dollar weakness and sustained foreign fund inflows too supported the rupee. Traders said that they expect the RBI to now allow the rupee to appreciate as it could help in combating inflation.

At the interbank forex market, the rupee finished at 72.87, up 75 paise from its previous close of 73.62. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a



basket of six currencies extended its flight below the 92 levels.

Encouraging macro data uplifted the domestic risk sentiment. The benchmark 10-year bond yield closed 18 basis points lower at 5.94 per cent as the RBI introduced several measures to soothe sentiment in the bond market.

Darshit Purohit at IFA Global said, "The central bank has stepped off the gas in accumulating the foreign exchange reserves and might intervene only to curb sharp volatility. Rupee is now down by only 2 per cent for the calendar year 2020. It marked an all-time low on April 22, 2020 at 76.91 (losing 7.73 per cent). Global dollar weakness, sustained FII inflows (\$6.82 billion in August), strengthening Asian currencies and RBI stepping aside from dollar buying intervention are the key factors behind the recent recovery in the Rupee."

"The immediate support is 72.40 to 72.50 levels," added Purohit.

The Reserve Bank on Monday announced a host of steps, including term repo operations totalling Rs 1 lakh crore in mid-September to ease pressure on liquidity.

Inventory stocking helps car numbers

MICHAEL GONCALVES
PUNE, SEP. 1

India's biggest car maker Maruti Suzuki, with 50 per cent market share, on Tuesday registered 17 per cent growth in overall sales led by a 20 per cent jump at 113,033 units in domestic sales in August.

Hyundai Motor, India's second largest car maker, reported a 20 per cent uptick in August with sales of 45,809 units.

Kia Motors posted 74 per cent year-on-year growth with 10,845 unit sales last month.

Sales at MG Motor India jumped 41 per cent year-on-year at 2,851 units. However, sales at Honda Cars India fell 9 per cent year-on-year at 7,509 units.

Kia Motors posted 74 per cent year-on-year growth with 10,845 unit sales last month.

Sales at Mahindra and Mahindra grew 1 per cent year-on-year at 13,651 units.

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