

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VIJAYAWADA | TUESDAY | 1 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 34.0°C
Min: 25°C
RH: 32%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Humid and Overcast

Max/Min temp. 34/25 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+70,417)	(+880)
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



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
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.23 am; 11.06 pm to 11.53 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Muharram 12, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.25 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 5.00 pm
Maghrib: 6.35 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.20 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.54 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 6.02 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 5.49 AM

COUNTER POINT



The government has replaced my Black Cat security with this swadeshi dog!

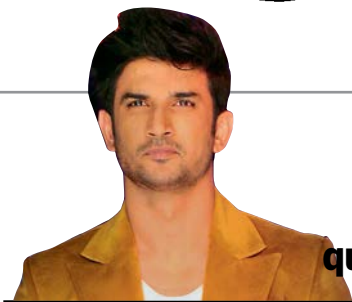
IN BRIEF

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



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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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GDP shrinks by record 23.9%

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

Lockdown impact steeper: Experts

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.

Chief economic adviser K.V. Subramanian said: "We are witnessing a V-shaped recovery as the economy unlocks e-way bills at 99.9 per cent vs August last year, despite local lockdowns. This will continue. Once the Unlock phase was undertaken, the decline has been progressively lower. The trend is of a V-shaped recovery. There is still residual un-

certainty, 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."

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 said on Monday.

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

impact of 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.

Analysts at Care Ratings said growth in the rural and agricultural economy will not be sufficient to compensate for the decline in urban demand. — PTI

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 Lake, 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 tranquillity 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



A fighter jet flies in the skies of Leh in Ladakh on Monday.

— 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 and 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.

SC fines Bhushan ₹1 for contempt

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

Lawyer-activist Prashant Bhushan, held guilty of contempt for his tweets criticising Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde, former CJs and the Supreme Court, was asked to pay a notional fine of ₹1 by the top court on Monday.

If he didn't pay the fine by September 15, he'd face jail for three months and a ban from practicing in the Supreme Court for three years, a three-judge bench ordered while saying that despite its repeated suggestions, Mr Bhushan had refused to tender an apology, showing both "adameance and ego" though his act of denigrating the judiciary was "very serious".

In a tweet on Monday afternoon, Mr Bhushan said that he had "gratefully accepted" the contribution for the fine from his lawyer.

"My lawyer & senior colleague Rajiv Dhavan contributed 1 Re immediately after the contempt judgement today which I gratefully accepted," Mr Bhushan tweeted with photographs of him holding up a ₹1 coin.

"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," he told reporters in the evening.

While passing the order, Justice Arun Mishra, who was heading the bench, said, "In our considered view, the act committed by the contemnor (Prashant Bhushan) is a very serious one. He has attempted to denigrate the reputation of the institution of administration of justice of which he himself is a part."

Speaking for the bench, also comprising Justice B.R. Gawai and Justice Krishna Murari, Justice Mishra said, "The court, from the very beginning,



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 adameance 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.

G.V.K. Reddy, chairman, GVK Group said, "The aviation industry has been severely impacted by Covid-19, setting it back by many years and has impacted the financials of Mumbai International Airport Ltd. It was, therefore, important that we bring in a financially strong investor."

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.

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

remaining shareholding will be left to the private player who will design, build, finance, develop and operate the park.

The catch here is that the state cabinet had decided the location of the bulk drug park as East Godavari district and later imposed a precondition that the private partner should offer 2,000 acres as equity besides financing.

■ Page 2: Aurobindo in talks with GMR Group for land bank

END OF AN ERA

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

Former President of India and stalwart of Indian politics Pranab Mukherjee, who was often called the "man for all seasons", died at the Army's Research and Referral Hospital in New Delhi on Monday after ailing for some weeks. He was 84. His son Abhijit Mukherjee announced the news of his death. He is survived by his son

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 announ-



ced seven days of state mourning throughout the country, when the tri-

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, this is to inform you that my

father Pranab Mukherjee has just passed away in spite of the best efforts of the doctors of R&R Hospital and prayers, duas and prathanas from people throughout India," his son tweeted.

Mukherjee was conferred the Padma Vibhushan in 2008 and the Bharat Ratna in 2019. His political career spanned nearly five decades. Mukherjee, who started as an election manager, reached the top of the

pyramid when he became President in 2012. He served as President till 2017.

During his long political career, Mukherjee donned many hats. He served as external affairs minister, finance minister, defence minister, commerce minister, besides being leader of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

■ Page 4: Pranab's career defined by Gandhis

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 him 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 Kanduru 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. Madhusudan 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 Ahoibillu 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 could not store even 5 TMC ft. In addition, the mid penner 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 capacity 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 Ramkrishna.

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 bo-



High Level Canal flows from Tungabhadra Dam to AP.

Water drawing capacity of canals from Srisaillam to be increased

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, AUG. 31

The drawing capacity of water channels from Srisaillam 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

ard authorities are ready to release more water during rainy season.

Tungabhadra board secretary, Naga Mohan, said

● **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.**

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 Srisaillam 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

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 KRMB (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 Srisaillam 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.

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

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.T. 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

Aurobindo in talks with GMR Group for land bank

From Page 1

Sources told this newspaper that Aurobindo has been in talks with the GMR group which has a land bank of about 7,000 acres for its proposed Special Economic Zone and deep water port projects near Kakinada, for the required extent of land. People at the highest levels of the state government, who are very keen to get the mega bulk drug park to the state, facilitated the discussions among the top echelons of the two groups, sources added.

The Centre announced funding for three bulk drug parks under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat

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.

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.

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

On Wednesday morning, he reaches YSR ghat, Idupulapaya by 9.45 am. From 9.50 am to 10.30 am, he will pay tributes along with family members to his father, late Chief Minister Dr.YS Rajasekhar Reddy at YSR Ghat.

Later he will depart from Idupulapaya to Kadapa airport by 10.45 am. He will depart from Kadapa airport to Gannavaram by flight at 11.15 am.

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 Chennuru 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.

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

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-

cel and reform decisions taken by the previous regime. He also said that the government also did not have any right to constitute a cabinet subcommittee and an SIT.

Prasad's senior counsel, P. Veera Reddy, argued against the issues mentioned in the counter affidavit filed by the state government.

Advocate general, S. Sriam, informed the court that the findings of the Cabinet subcommittee were sent to the centre and also expressed willingness for a CBI probe. He felt the need to add both the centre and the CBI as respondents in the case.

The judge said that the final hearing in the case would be taken up virtually as there was no clarity on when a physical hearing could be resumed and posted the final hearing in the case as September 1.

Farmer seeks police help to save his land

KMP PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 31

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 Kondadu. On October 31, 2002, local tahsildar 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 superintendent of police last week seeking protection.

AP to take up comprehensive land survey from next January

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 31

Andhra Pradesh will take up a comprehensive land survey, availing high-end technology, from Jan. 1, 2021 to Aug. 31, 2023.

Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, directed officials to come up with an action plan to take up the comprehensive land survey in the state and complete it in two-and-half-years, during a review meeting with ministers and the senior officials at his camp office here on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, Jagan asked officials to provide the services of office of sub-registration at village secretariats and felt the need for newly purchased equipment to be made available for taking up such a survey at village

secretariats.

He called for a simultaneous land survey in all mandals in the state and asked officials to enhance the number of the 4,500 newly formed teams for the survey.

Calling for widespread publicity for the survey in village secretariats by displaying posters providing all requisite information, Jagan asked officials to procure all requisite equipment for the survey, including specially designed stones to earmark area of ownership, drones and rovers and called for setting up base stations, mobile tribunals and vehicles for the movement of the survey teams.

He laid stress on training the teams involved in land survey on key issues to make the survey foolproof.

Officials informed Jagan that AP would be the first state in the country to avail high-end technology to take up a comprehensive land survey and added that as mobile tribunals would be set up, they could be of immense utility to avoid any land disputes at the time of the survey itself.

They said that survey would help purification of land records and benefit the farmers in a big way. During the survey, rovers would transmit data to enable the recording of survey details online so that it would avoid any tampering of data.

Given that this is the first survey in decades, Jagan called for awareness-building among the people by conducting gram sabhas and also asked officials to explain

the benefits of the survey to landowners.

All efforts were being made to resolve pending land disputes, said officials, adding that they were taking up a special drive to resolve 52,866 land disputes pending in revenue courts and 79,405 disputes related to lapses in webland.

A comprehensive survey was taken up as a pilot project at Jaggayyapeta in Krishna district.

While 182 kamatas were exiting earlier, after the survey their number had gone up to 631. Officials also informed Jagan that for 631 kamatas, there were 829 survey numbers in the mandal.

Transparency in the land survey would help farmers get rights over their lands without any issues.

Sannareddy underscores the need to develop world-class infrastructure for attracting investments

Govt measures boosted investment climate in state: Sri City MD

AVINASH
P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, AUG. 31

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organised a digital conference on the theme 'reinforcing growth through infrastructure development: investment destination' for the state of AP on Monday. R. Karikal Valaven, IAS, special chief secretary, indus-

try and commerce, Ravindra Sannareddy, founder managing director, Sri City and a host of industry and business leaders addressed the conference.

Speaking at the forum, Ravindra Sannareddy underscored the need to develop world-class infrastructure for attracting investments. Sharing some of his experiences from the development

phase of Sri City, he lauded the foresight of Late Dr Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy. He said, "As Chief Minister of the united AP, he encouraged industrial development and extended good support."

Emphasising on the availability of the balanced mix of excellent industrial and social infrastructure in Sri City, he said, "Developed with world class

infrastructure on the concept and principles of 'work, live, learn and play,' Sri City is home for 187 industrial units from 27 countries, offering job opportunities to over 50,000 people.

He further stressed that to facilitate exports and imports also, the Tirupati (Renigunta) airport, which is already a classified international airport, must immediately begin to

ramp up its cargo carriage facilities.

Mr Karikal Valaven said that as the state's economic growth hinges on industrial development, the government has focused on the industrial sector and also on ways to attract more investments.

He said the government had introduced a new industrial policy to focus on providing best-in-class in-

frastructure, zero-hassle set-up, skilled labour and end-to-end hand-holding support for units to provide an industry-friendly environment at par with international standards. Emphasis is also being laid on reducing the risk and cost of doing business, he added.

"Development of four new ports to set the stage for AP to become the logis-

tic hub and gateway to South-East Asia is underway. New industrial parks in different districts will be developed, while infrastructure in the existing ones will be improved. Land, water and power are being made available as per the requirement of industries, and townships will be developed following the safety and environmental norms," he said.



SHORT TAKES

FLOOD-HIT VICTIMS
LOSE ALL THEIR
BELONGINGSVADREVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, AUG. 31

The flood-hit villagers in Devipatnam mandal, who were evacuated to relief centres for avoiding one of the worst floods in recent times, are returning to their villages only to find their household utensils, essential commodities, agriculture and forest produce, TVs, cots and other belongings washed away or damaged in the flood waters.

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 Thoyeeru village in Devipatnam mandal. He said that he has never seen such floods in their village. He felt he would have avoided losses, had the government construct their rehabilitation colonies before the floods.

P. Krishna Rao, honorary president of Polavaram Project Nirvasithula Parirakshana 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. Krishna Rao wanted the government to help the flood-hit people of the Polavaram affected villages.

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-hit villages.

Awareness drive on
cybercrime concludesDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 31

Awareness programme on cybercrime named 'e-rakshabandhan' concluded on Monday with experts delivering a series of lectures online on safeguards to be taken up especially by women to avoid being duped.

The AP police and the CID jointly organised the awareness programme which began on August 3.

The CID head P.V. Sunil Kumar said that they carried out awareness drive on cyber crimes during the conduct of e-rakshabandhan and added that they informed the participants

about how to lodge a complaint when they fall victim to cybercrime. He said that anyone could lodge a complaint on 'police4u.com'. He suggested to the people not to share details of bank accounts while playing online games and advised the people to be careful while tweeting comments on Twitter handle.

A large number of youth took part in the awareness programme, and people were aware of the fact that they need to visit a police station in case they were subjected to cybercrime.

Nearly 10 lakh women were benefited by getting awareness of cybercrime.

FARMER CULTIVATES DRAGON
FRUIT IN KADAPA DISTRICTNAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | 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 Bhasha and Suresh in addition to collector Hari Kiran 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 hospital 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, Gangi-

reddy, 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 him in this venture.

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |
DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 31

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

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |
DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 31

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

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

Private hospitals accept only cash and no online financial transaction to avoid detection. Once a patient is admitted, his or her family members hardly get any information about the course of treatment, except to pay the amount at the cash counter for medicines, injections, medical tests and other requirements.

Unfortunately, in case the patient dies within a few hours of admission, family members cannot ask for part of money back. Instead, they will be asked to pay for shifting the body for cremation to the tune of ₹10,000 to ₹15,000, depending upon the distance and ₹1,500 for

Several patients and their kin questioned the state health authorities for failing to update the data on bed strength on a regular basis, which has facilitated the illegal practice.

a PPE kit for the driver.

In a case in Rajahmundry, a 70-year-old man infected with Covid-19, related to a local builder, was admitted in a private hospital paying ₹5 lakh and in seven hours, he breathed his last. No money was returned and instead his family was asked to pay extra for the ambulance to take the body for cremation.

Though the state government has issued directions fixing rates for providing Covid-19 treatment, most

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. We will open a toll-free call centre so that anyone can lodge a complaint about hospitals for violation of norms, so that we can take action to curb such practices."

In Visakhapatnam, a government doctor had to beg

a private hospital to provide a bed for his kin who developed breathlessness and started vomiting blood. He managed to get a bed after 10 hours and after a few hours of getting admission, the patient died.

A gazetted government employee working in panchayat raj was ready to sell his three-bed room flat for ₹40 lakh to provide treatment to his mother infected with Covid-19 in a private hospital.

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.

Police clamps
Sec. 144 in city
from todayDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 31

As a precautionary measure to avoid any untoward incidents, the police decided to clamp Section 144 in the city from September 1 to October 15.

Vijayawada city police commissioner B. Srinivasulu said that they were imposing Section 144 in the Vijayawada police commissionerate limits to avoid any breach of law and order and to maintain peace and normalcy and also to ensure smooth flow of vehicular traffic.

He said that no assembling of five or more persons would be allowed and nobody should move carrying sticks and lethal weapons and cautioned that if anyone intended to flout the rules, stern action would be taken.

Section 144 in the city from September 1 to October 15

Woman sets up Covid ward
at home, saves parentsK.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM,
AUG. 31

A young woman saved her parents and herself from Covid-19 by setting up a medical facility at her home on the beachfront in Visakhapatnam.

A senior business executive with a multinational advertising firm in Bengaluru, Swathi (name changed) had been working from her Vizag home since January this year. Her 75-year-old mother had been confined to a wheelchair after suffering from multiple sclerosis.

Her father, though 82, led a normal life. On August 14, her mother showed all key symptoms of Covid-19 and her oxygen

level too fell to 78.

Because of her mother's immobility, Swathi could not take her to a hospital and get her tested for the virus. She also could not get anybody to collect the swab, a facility now available online.

While the clock was ticking, she was in two minds – whether to admit her mother to a hospital, where proper care could not be expected due to the rush of patients, or try and get medical personnel or treat her mother at home. She chose the latter.

Without losing time, she quickly got an oxygen cylinder set up with a mask in a room, which she turned into a makeshift Covid ward. On the advice of medical

professionals, she also arranged medicines as administered to Coronavirus patients all over. She also had a thermometer, electric steam inhaler and oximeter.

"I had a cook, servant and technicians visiting my home. I provided them PPEs. I spent most of my time with my mother building confidence in her. I was cleaning and feeding her after confining my aged father to a single room after he too started showing primary symptoms of Covid. I also had symptoms but went on caring for my mother," Swathi said.

Finally, her efforts paid off on Sunday morning when her mother felt normal.

AP crosses 1-lakh mark of active Covid cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 31

Andhra Pradesh has crossed the one-lakh mark of Covid-19 active cases by registering 1,00,276 during the last 24 hours. State health authorities released Covid-19 bulletin here on Monday reporting that out of 56,490 samples tested, 10,004 individuals have tested Covid-19 positive, raising the overall tally to 4,34,771.

The bulletin also reported the death of 85 patients, taking the death toll to 3,969.

Out of 37,22,912 samples tested in the state so far, 3,30,526 infected patients have been discharged after recovery while 1,00,276 patients are active and undergoing treatment in

various hospitals of the state.

East Godavari continues to top the state by registering the highest number of 1,383 new Coronavirus infections, followed by 1,142 in West Godavari, 1,023 in Srikakulam, 1,086 in Nellore, 973 in Anantapur, 936 in Chittoor, 686 in Kurnool, 634 in Visakhapatnam, 540 in Vizianagaram, 524 in Prakasam, 498 in Guntur, 420 in Kadapa and 159 in Krishna.

Among the cumulative cases of infection, East Godavari has been the worst-affected district with 59,403 cases, followed by 44,745 in Kurnool, 41,128 in Anantapur, 37,106 in West Godavari, 36,694 in Visakhapatnam, 36,649 in Chittoor, 35,761 in Guntur, 30,680 in Nellore, 26,119 in


Kadapa, 24,078 in Srikakulam, 22,830 in Prakasam, 20,399 in Vizianagaram, 16,284 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

However, providing much relief to East Godavari administration, the rate of recovery in the district has been good with 40,243 patients recovering from the infection, followed by 37,865 in Kurnool, 34,603 in Anantapur, 32,370 in West Godavari, 29,078 in Visakhapatnam, 27,799 in Guntur, 27,368 in Chittoor, 23,733 in Nellore, 18,913 in Kadapa, 17,185 in Srikakulam, 13,725 in Krishna, 12,396 in Prakasam, 12,353 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Nellore has registered the day's highest number of deaths, with 12 infected patients succumbing to the virus, followed by nine each in Chittoor and Prakasam, eight in Kadapa, seven each in Anantapur, East Godavari, Guntur and West Godavari, six each in Kurnool and Visakhapatnam, four in Srikakulam, two in Krishna and one in Vizianagaram.

The state health authorities have discharged 8,772 patients after recovery from the infection in the last 24 hours in the state.

AP has carried out Covid-19 tests on 69,717 samples per million population and has registered Covid-19 positive rate of 11.68. Maharashtra tested 32,767 samples with a positive rate of 19.08.



**पावरग्रिड
POWERGRID**

NOTICE

1. Approval under regulation-88 of CERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations 1999 and CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations 2019 for determination of Transmission Tariff from DCCO to 31.03.2024 for **Petition-1** for 02 nos. 63 MVAR Bus Reactor along with associated bays and equipments at Yelahanka GIS under System Strengthening -XXIII in Southern Region.

2. The beneficiaries of the above mentioned Transmission system are: (a) KPTCL (b) APTRANSCO (c) KSEB (d) Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Ltd. (e) Electricity Dept. of Goa (f) Electricity Dept. of Puducherry (g) APSPDCL (h) TSSPDCL (i) APCPDCL (j) TSNPDCL (k) BESCOM (l) GESCOM (m) HESCOM (n) MESCOM (o) GESC (p) Transmission Corporation of Telangana Limited (q) TNEB (r) APEPDCL (s) APNPDCL

3. **Tariff details:**

Name of the Asset	Petition-1
	Asset as mentioned above
Approved Capital cost (₹Lakhs) (FR)	Asset-1: ₹1584.37 lakhs and Asset-2: ₹1580.78 lakhs
Authority which has approved Capital Cost	Board of Directors of POWERGRID
Schedule DCCO (FR)	29.07.2017
DCCO (Actual)	02.01.2020 and 13.01.2020
Estimated Completion Cost (₹Lakhs)	Asset-1: ₹1341.41 lakhs and Asset-2: ₹1225.11 lakhs
Tariff for year 2019-24 (₹In Lacs)	
2019-20	45.44 40.17
2020-21	218.37 211.14
2021-22	236.68 218.14
2022-23	232.17 214.09
2023-24	227.70 210.09

4. A copy of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the website of the applicant at www.powergridindia.com.

5. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application be filed by any person, including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 3rd & 4th floor, Chandralok Building, Janpath, New Delhi - 110 001 (or other address where the office of the Commission is situated), with a copy to the applicant at the address of its corporate office within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Place: Gurugram
Date: 25.08.2020
Sd/-
Chief General Manager (Commercial)

POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprise)
Corp. Office : 'Saudamini', Plot No. 2, Sector-29, Gurugram-122001, (Haryana) Tel. : 0124-2571700-719
Reg. Office : B-8, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi-110 016. Tel. : 011-26560112, 26560121
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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 Kutru police station in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar district of Bijapur on Sunday evening.

Body of Korsa Naigaiya (59), posted in Kutru 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 protestors.

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.

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.

nearly ₹7 lakh. Now, hope is completely shattered as the flood water in the Baitarani river system has washed away my poultry unit," said Rajanikant Satpathy, a poultry farm owner of Panasa village in Jajpur district.

Dozens of poultry farmers in the adjoining areas have lost their investments. Akshaya Rout, a guest worker of Dharmasala in Jajpur district had returned from Surat in April after the nationwide lockdown was announced.

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 Mahandi 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.

Major rivers in Odisha, including Mahanadi, Brahmani, Baitarani, Birupa,

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.

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.

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, Gulzari Lal Nanda was appointed as acting PM.

Pranab Mukherjee was

Mukherjee signed AP Reorganisation Bill

S.A. ISHAQUI | 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. Chandrababhan Naidu 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.

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.

24 Akbar Road, the Congress headquarters, soon became a regular haunt and it was not very long before I began getting to know people there and they me. Pranab Mukherjee, a redoubtable senior Congress leader, had a fairly smallish room for his office in the building. The room may have been small, but he never stopped anyone from

● **PRANAB** Mukherjee had a fairly smallish room for his office in the building. The room may have been small, but he never stopped anyone from entering it and having a quick chat.

entering it and having a quick chat.

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 journoes 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 24

Mukherjee were wrong."

The content in the "Red Diary", if ever seen the light of the day, could lift the curtains, which even in his book, *The Coalition Years* Mukherjee refrained from doing.

His book displayed caution and actually is not a tell-all memoir. Pranab had been privy to all the redefining moments in Indian politics ranging from creation and rise of the militant Sikh leader, Jarnail Singh, anti-Sikh riots and demolition Babri Mosque among others.

People teach parties a lesson, Pranab had said

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 31

Pranab Mukherjee, then President, strongly believed that the beauty of Indian democracy was that the people teach befitting lessons to political parties and force their leaders to do mid-course corrections.

I was excited when assigned to accompany him to Allahabad on Christmas in 2013 during his Southern sojourn. Paying rapt attention to his English heavy with the Bengali accent, I spent considerable time on board the President's aircraft and spoke with him on many issues.

On our return, we were told by his press secretary that Mukherjee was tired and would not interact with us. I insisted that we be allowed because it's a rare opportunity.

He agreed on the condition that we do not discuss politics but little did the press secretary realise that Mukherjee was a politician to the core and would love to talk politics

more than anything else.

Referring to five, instead of three, elections between 1989 and 1999, Mukherjee said that politicians, accustomed to single party rule could not adjust to coalition politics. The people forced them to do mid-course corrections by continuing to give fractured mandates.

The result, he said, was an unwritten understanding among the parties that stability should not be disturbed. From then on the country saw stable governments despite fractured mandates. "You people (media) even suggested Constitutional amendments to ensure stability but people have their own way of setting things right," he said smiling broadly.

I wanted his views on the highly sensitive issue of state bifurcation. He started saying that people and parties come together to resolve issues but his press secretary barged in and said a strict no.

Pranab then moved on to the simplicity of yesterday politicians.

Akbar Road was concerned. I was apprehensive but I clearly remember how warm and welcoming Pranab Mukherjee was as I asked him if I could enter his office. I also clearly recall how he ordered some samosas for me as we got down to business.

As I told him I was having some difficulty in reading the country's budget and had questions. He answered my questions and we spent about an hour or so discussing the budget. And then he made an offer I could not refuse.

"Come home tomorrow morning and I will teach you how to read the budget," Pranab Mukherjee had said. For me it was a double delight. Pranab da would get to know me a little more. On top of that, I

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.

Pranab's career defined by Gandhis

From Page 1

Mukherjee was born on December 11, 1935 at Mirati, a village (now in Birbhum district of West Bengal). He studied history, political science and law at Calcutta University.

His political journey began in 1969 when he became the election manager of V.K. Krishna Menon, who was contesting as an Independent. Indira Gandhi got him into the Congress and sent him to the Rajya Sabha. His rise under Mrs Gandhi was meteoric. At 47, he became India's youngest finance minister in 1982. He was one of the few leaders who stood by Indira when she imposed Emergency in 1975 and when she split the Congress in 1978.

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",

● **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". Mukherjee wrote: "She (Sonia) told me frankly, 'Pranabji, you are the most eminently suited for the office, but you should not forget the crucial role you are playing in the functioning of the government. Could you suggest an alternative?'"

Then came something which virtually forced Sonia's hand. Mamata Banerjee, at a joint press conference with Mulayam Singh Yadav said their presidential nominees were A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Dr Singh and Somnath Chatterjee. Ms Banerjee revealed that Sonia Gandhi had proposed the names of Hamid Ansari and Mukherjee, which were "unacceptable" to them.

Realising they could not lose the presidential election, several meetings were held among UPA partners, and the Left proposed Mukherjee's name, which was seconded by others. Sonia endorsed his candidature.

Mukherjee wrote in *The Coalition Years*: "After briefing the meeting on the presidential election, Sonia Gandhi bid me an emotional farewell... Thereafter, with a mischievous smile, she looked at me and said: 'Along with that, of course, I will miss some of his tantrums'."

Mukherjee hit the headlines in 2018 when he accepted an invitation to be chief guest at an RSS function.

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-

● **THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE** began questioning Gaurav Arya from 10.30 am at the agency's south Mumbai office to undergo scrutiny on whether there was any laundering of money and on the narcotics messages that were exchanged in 2017.

ly to grill Arya in connection with the drugs angle. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) meanwhile grilled Chakraborty for the fourth consecutive day on Monday.

The ED began questioning Arya from 10.30 am at the agency's south Mumbai office to undergo scrutiny on whether there was any laundering of money and on the narcotics messages that were

exchanged in 2017. The text messages were later shared with the NCB and the CBI by the ED. Arya has however refuted the allegations saying he neither ever peddled drugs nor spoke to Rhea till date.

The Enforcement Directorate earlier questioned Rhea, her brother Showik and two sisters of Rajput apart from his chartered accountant and other staffers.

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.

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.

— PTI

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 airspace," 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. — *PTI*

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 Becchina said the latest shooting at the 9ine 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*

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.

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 aca-

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".

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

INDIA ABROAD

Indian-origin leader underlines need to focus on foreigners' living conditions

Pritam Singh is Singapore's first Leader of Oppn

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 Indraneel 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.

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 pointed out. Singh called on the Ministry of 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*

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 abuse".

"The result was disgraceful images at the Reichstag which are unacceptable, anti-democrats trying to make themselves heard on the steps of our democratic Parliament," he said.

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

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. President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Monday invited the officers to Berlin's Bellevue Palace to thank them for their work. He described the protesters' actions as "despicable", adding: "We will not tolerate any anti-democratic smear campaign or disparagement of the Federal Republic of Germany at the

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 on 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 gruelling 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 facing a 15-day jail sentence on charges of organising an unsanctioned protest. The factory, which accounts for a fifth of the world's potash fertiliser output, is the nation's top cash earner. Strike committee spokesman Gleb Sandras said authorities had managed to halt a strike that began two weeks ago. — *AP*

200 PAKISTANIS STRANDED IN INDIA TO RETURN

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, AUG. 31

At least 200 people stranded in India due to the Coronavirus lockdown will return to Pakistan on September 3, officials said Sunday.

Pakistan had sealed its border with India in March after a surge in number of Coronavirus infections. The people who had gone to India got stuck there as a result of the lockdown.

Pakistanis, stranded in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Delhi and Rajasthan, will return via Wagha border. The border between the two countries will be especially opened for them.

According to a source in the foreign office, their return was made possible because of the efforts of the Pakistani High Commission in India.

SHARIF AT RISK IF EXPOSED TO COVID: REPORT

DC CORRESPONDENT ISLAMABAD, AUG. 31

Fresh medical reports of former PM Nawaz Sharif were submitted in Lahore High Court showed that he may be "at much greater risk than a normal person" if exposed to Covid-19.

Sharif, given his age and significant disease burden, falls in the category of patients who, if exposed to the virus.

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.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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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



Is another global eco crisis now inevitable?



Mohan Guruswamy

The international system was unilaterally abrogated in 1971 when US President Nixon delinked the dollar from the gold standard.

establishment of an international reserve currency called “bancor”, administered by a global central bank. but this had to be shelved in the face of American obduracy. This central bank would be vested with the possibility of creating money and with the authority to take action to ensure balanced trade.

As outlined by Keynes, countries with payment surpluses should increase imports from the deficit countries, thereby ensuring foreign trade equilibrium.

But the United States, as a likely net exporter and creditor nation, and eager to take on the role of the world’s economic powerhouse, thwarted the Keynes plan. The American delegates seemed more concerned about inflationary pressures in the post-war economy. Its delegate, Harry Dexter White, argued that an imbalance was a problem only of the deficit country. White’s determined obduracy is now under a cloud after he was unmasked as a Soviet spy. Did he scuttle “bancor” at Moscow’s insistence to ensure the crisis we now are living through?

The international system was unilaterally abrogated in 1971 when US President Nixon delinked the dollar from the gold standard. In the absence of a standard and a useful regulatory function for the IMF, the great private banks were given a licence to run amok. We now reap the bitter harvest. With the US dollar as the world’s preferred currency, the US and its profligate citizens have an apparently endless access to easy credit to satiate their sundry appetites. Ironically, the ever-rising annual US trade deficit is the de facto engine of growth for many economies, like China, the Asean countries and even India.

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

Total world reserves in 2019-Q2 was \$11.8 trillion, of which 61.8 per cent was held in US dollars, 20.5 per cent in euros, 5.7 per cent in yen and 1.8 per cent in Renminbi.

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 need for the use of electronic 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-10 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.

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

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

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 showcase 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

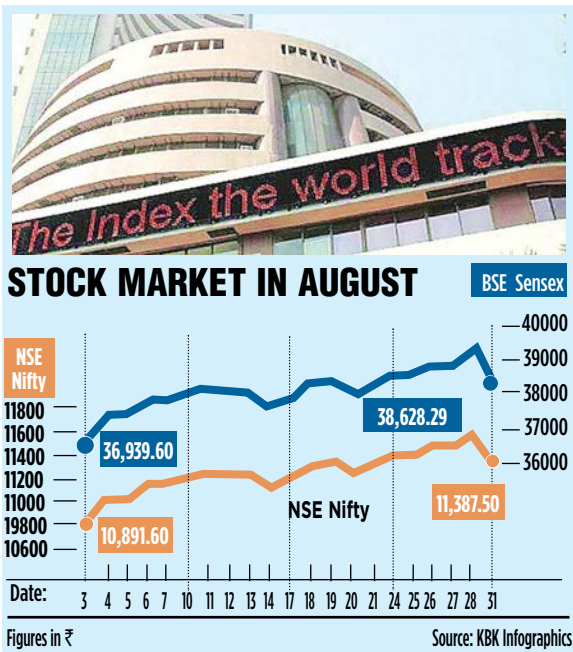
RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, AUG. 31

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, 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-



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

SWEDEN MOVES CLOSER TO MAKING FOSSIL-FUEL-FREE STEEL

HANNA HOIKKALA & JESPER STARN 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.

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

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 it

thinks 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. At the end of 2019, NBIM held a 0.84 per cent stake in Formosa Chemicals & Fibre, valued at \$144 million, and a 0.64 per cent stake in Formosa Taffeta valued at \$12.2 million. The stake in Page Industries at that time stood at 0.42 per cent, with a market value of \$15.4 million.

The fund said in the statement that its management will also scrutinise oil firm PetroChina's work, engaging in active ownership in the hope of boosting the company's anti-corruption practices. PetroChina 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

Singapore's Atlantis launches digital bank

New Delhi, Aug 31: Singapore-based fintech company Atlantis on Monday said it has entered the Indian market with the launch of its digital bank, Neo-Bank. Eying the \$15.7 billion global millennial banking industry, Atlantis has launched Neo-Bank for Gen Z and millennials, a company release said. The financial value of

millennials to the banking system is expected to increase by almost 80 per cent in the next five years to more than \$27 billion from the current \$15.7 billion in revenue that millennials contribute. The company believes that customer-first intelligent systems and design will drive the future of neo-banking, it said. Neo banking is an online con-

cept where there are no physical branches of a bank and customers transact all services digitally. The bank is looking to sign up not more than 3,000 users in the first three months as it aims to create a personalised experience for each of its users. Currently, it accepts a new user either through a waitlist or an invite from an existing member.—PTI

RBI announces measures to cool yields, boost liquidity

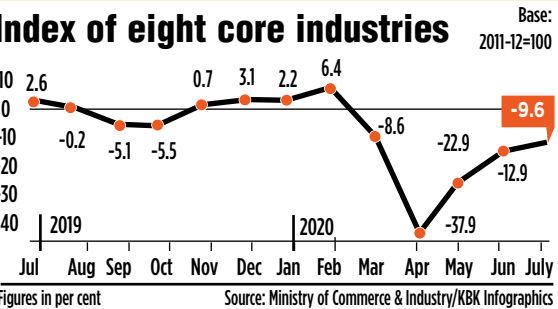
FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, AUG. 31

Heading to banks' long-pending wish-list, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday allowed banks to park new government bonds acquisition made from September 1, 2020 upto March 31, 2021 under the 'held to maturity' (HTM) category up to an overall limit of 22 per cent of their deposits against the existing limit of 19.5 per cent, thereby allowing an additional purchase capacity of approximately Rs 3.6 lakh crore for banks without worrying about fluctuation risks over this period. In addition, the RBI also announced a slew of measures to cool bond yields and maintain market stability at a time when more than 50 per cent of the Rs 20-lakh crore plus (Centre and states combined) borrowing programme will be coming up. Among the other measures, the RBI also announced two more tranches of special open market bond operations, or 'Operation Twist,' and



additional term repo operations of Rs 1 lakh crore at a floating rate basis. The RBI also reiterated that it "remains committed to use all instruments at its command to revive the economy by maintaining congenial financial conditions, mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and restore the economy to a path of sustainable growth while preserving macroeconomic and financial stability." The yields on government bonds have risen in the last one week on two concerns—the RBI MPC minutes released last week while did not say anything new, yet led to consternation on the future course of inflation.

Core sector output contracts 9.6% in July



FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

With the phase-wise implementation of unlockdown, production in the country's eight core sectors has shown a slight improvement, contracting to -9.6 per cent in July against the -12.9 per cent contraction in June. This is the fifth consecutive month of contraction for the core industries, according to government data released on Monday. The data on the core eight sectors—coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity—comes ahead of the government further easing restrictions on the move-

ment and assembly of people in September in a staggered fashion. The eight sectors collectively have a 40 per cent weightage on the Index of Industrial Production (IIP). Aditi Nayar, principal economist at Icmr, said that based on the available trends for the core sector, auto production and merchandise exports, "we expect the contraction in the Industrial Index of Production to ease to 7-11 per cent in July 2020 from 16.6 per cent in June 2020". The production of 8 core sectors had expanded by 2.6 per cent in July 2019, the release said. Output of all sectors showed contraction in July except the fertiliser segment.

Fiscal deficit past full year target in four months

New Delhi, Aug. 31: India's federal fiscal deficit in the four months to end July stood at Rs 8.21 lakh crore (\$111.7 billion), or 103.1 per cent of the budgeted target for the current fiscal year, government data showed on Monday. Net tax receipts were Rs 2.03 lakh crore while total expenditure was at Rs 10.5 lakh crore, the data showed, indicating the government had stepped up its spending to combat the impact of the coronavirus.

The deficit is predicted to cross 7.5 per cent of GDP in the 2020-21 fiscal year that began in April, private economists said, from initial government estimates of 3.5 per cent, mainly due to a sharp economic contraction triggered by the pandemic. —Reuters

Emirates got \$2 billion of virus funding

ARCHANA NARAYANAN & LAYAN ODEH AUG. 31

Dubai's government has put \$2 billion into Emirates since March to help its flagship airline sustain operations during the coronavirus pandemic. The state indicated earlier in the year it was committed to providing financial support to the world's largest long-haul carrier. "Any further support will be subject to the airline's requirements and will depend on the impact and duration of the ongoing Covid-19 situation," according to the document. Emirates was particularly hit by the pandemic as its business model is built around the biggest category of jets—Airbus SE A380s and Boeing 777s—carrying passengers between all corners of the globe. —Bloomberg

Demand for online doctors creates a \$39-bn titan

RICHARD MACAULEY AUG. 31

Two decades ago, Itaru Tanimura ended a 12-year run at McKinsey & Co to lead M3 Inc, an online provider of medical information and services backed by entertainment giant Sony Corp. What followed was a flurry of acquisitions that turned the Tokyo-based company into a \$39 billion global behemoth. M3 now has about 40 subsidiaries and affiliates, including MDLinx Inc. in the US and Britain's Doctors.net.uk. M3 helps pharmaceutical companies, doctors and their patients access information online over its platforms, removing the need for in-person visits - something that proved important in the time of Covid-19. Its

shares have almost doubled this year, surging the most of any company in the Nikkei 225 Stock Average and taking the fortune of Tanimura to \$1.2 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. "Online doctor capabilities are in the spotlight with Covid, as people are staying home," Jefferies Japan Ltd analyst Hiroko Sato said in an interview. "It's really a theme stock." A rush by smaller pharmaceutical companies to digitalize marketing materials after the coronavirus outbreak helped boost sales, with inquiries skyrocketing. M3's operating profit climbed 26 per cent in the quarter ended in June. The company's name stands for "the three Ms of Medicine, Media and Metamorphosis," and its goal is to change medi-



cine by "making full use of the power of the Internet," according to its website. Its acquisition-spre started in 2002, when M3 bought the Japanese unit of US medical portal site WebMD. MDLinx was acquired in 2006 and Doctors.net.uk in 2011. M3, which gets about three-quarters of its revenue from Japan, also has units in China, India and France. One of its US sub-

sidiaries was selected to take part in Moderna Inc's Covid-19 vaccine study. Tanimura, 55, is president and holds a 2.9 per cent stake in M3. Sony owns about a third of the company. M3 declined to comment for this story, while Sony didn't respond to phone calls and an email seeking comment. The pandemic has produced vast wealth gains amongst both tech and

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 whizz 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

New Delhi, Aug. 31: His exit from the IPL attributed to personal reasons this season, all-rounder Suresh Raina's stint with Chennai Super Kings seems in jeopardy even next year as the franchise might part ways with him before the 2021 edition.

The CSK camp based in Dubai reported 13 Covid-19 cases, a development which an IPL source said, played a role in the recently-retired India player's exit from the event. However, it has now emerged that the team management was not happy with the 32-year-old's "conduct" during the quarantine time, something which infuriated CSK owner and former BCCI president N. Srinivasan.

"In CSK, the norm is that the coach, captain and the manager get suites. However, Raina also gets a suite in any hotel that the franchise stays. It's just that his room didn't have a balcony," a source said.

"It was an issue but I don't think big enough to warrant a comeback (to India). There could be something more than just the scare of rising Covid-caseload," the source added, alluding to a speculated breach of the bio-bubble by Raina.

He said given the situation, Raina could well be gone for good now not only this season but also the next IPL scheduled in April, 2021. Is there a possibility of Raina coming back, thereby changing the circumstances? "He is unavailable this season and that is clear from the official statement issued by the CSK. Now there are certain things that have not gone down too well with the top people," the source said.

"It looks highly improbable that someone who has retired and likely won't play any cricket will come back for CSK. Maybe, he will be back in auc-



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

tion and someone else might pick him."

CSK is punting heavily on young Ruturaj, expecting that he will come good once he completes the quarantine and rejoins the training session after two negative tests.

"CSK has not yet asked for an official replacement for Raina...they are undecided," the source said. On the speculated bio-bubble breach, the source said an apology from Raina will have little impact given that the team is looking ahead. "I don't know about the apology part but CSK will now be eyeing to prepare Ruturaj looking at the future and Dhoni and Fleming will rejig their strategy accordingly," the source added. — *PTI*

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. Gambhir said on Star Sports' show.

"And he has been away from the game for the last one year, so he would end up getting a lot more balls to face and then he can actually play the anchor innings as well which he has been doing for India for the last couple of years," the two-time IPL-winning skipper said.

Gambhir said that Dhoni can come at one down as there are batsmen who can play the finishing game.

"So, MS Dhoni at No. 3 and then they have got depth with Kedar Jadhav, Dwayne Bravo, Sam Curran, all those guys they can come in," Gambhir said. — *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 viewership 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."

The controversial ending, 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.

There was a hint of disappointment when Anand spoke about the lack of recognition for chess players in the past few years. "There's been a drop off

in the attitude of the Sports Ministry towards chess players. I don't mean at a personal level obviously. Just that institutionally, we no longer get the awards for international competitions," said Anand.

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 added.

Grandmaster P. Harikrishna said it's the responsibility of the federation 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 weaving 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 match-



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. Kerber won in straight sets at 6-4, 6-4. — *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.

The 17th-seeded German, who entered the match having not competed since the fourth round of the Australian Open, overcame a shaky start on serve and got better as the 88-minute match at Louis Armstrong Stadium wore on.

Kerber, a three-times Grand Slam champion who triumphed at Flushing Meadows in 2016, traded breaks with Tomljanovic through the first four games of the match and then found her footing to take over the match.

The German southpaw

converted all three break point chances to pull ahead 5-4 and then went on to serve out at love to grab the first set.

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 been 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 sec-

onds 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 medalist 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*