


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VISAKHAPATNAM | WEDNESDAY | 2 SEPTEMBER 2020



WEATHER
Max: 36.0°C
Min: 26.8°C
Rt: 82%
Rainfall: 009.4mm
Forecast: Mist.
Max/Min temp.
36/26°C

COVID-19
COUNT

CASES

(+79,170)

37,63,509

DEATHS

(+1,021)

66,448

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,734)

(+9)

TS: 1,27,697

836

(+10,368)

(+84)

AP: 4,45,139

4,053

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,57,75,868

DEATHS

8,57,439

COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Bhadrpada Shuddha Pournami till 10.53 am

Star: Satabhisam till 6.35 pm

Varjyam: 1.35 am to 3.20 am (Thursday)

Durmuhurtam: 11.51 am to 12.40 pm

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm

HJRI CALENDAR

Muharram 13, 1442 AH

PRAVERS

Fajar: 5.50 am

Zohar: 1.30 pm

Asar: 4.45 pm

Maghrib: 6.15 pm

Isha: 8.15 pm


SUNSET TODAY 6.10 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.43 AM

MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.32 PM

MOONSET TODAY 5.37 AM

COUNTER POINT



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

IN BRIEF

Rajiv Kumar joins poll panel

New Delhi: Former bureaucrat Rajiv Kumar on Tuesday assumed charge as the new election commissioner. He takes the place vacated by Ashok Lavasa who joins the Asian Development Bank as vice president. Kumar, a retired 1984-batch IAS officer of the Jharkhand cadre, will have a five-year tenure and retire in 2025. He will preside over the next Lok Sabha polls in 2024. According to rules, an election commissioner has six years on the post or till he turns 65, whichever is earlier. Kumar was born in February, 1960. He worked in the government in different capacities during his 36-year long service. — PTI

NGT to ascertain mangrove damage

Kakinada: The National Green Tribunal (NGT), southern zone, has appointed a joint committee to ascertain the state of affairs in the mangroves at Kakinada, opposite the AP Maritime Board office. The NGT said the committee would inspect the area in question and submit a factual as well as action taken report on or before October 13 by e-filing to the NGT. If there is any violation found, including assessment of environmental compensation, it will recommend remedial measures to be taken to restore the damage caused to the environment.

■ Full report on Page 2

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Nawaz Sharif gets 10 days to surrender

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Osaka honours victims of racism

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Revellers ignore Covid

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

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

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

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

and Reserve Bank of India, that the economy contracted by nearly 24 per cent in the April-June quarter due to coronavirus-related lockdown and restrictions. The bench, also comprising Justices R.S. Reddy and M.R. Shah, said it would hear on Wednesday the pleas which have raised the issue of interest being charged on instalments which have been deferred under the central bank’s scheme during the

moratorium period. At the outset, Mehta told the bench that the Centre has filed its affidavit in the matter. When the court said that it has not yet received the affidavit, he said the bench should look into it and the matter be listed after two-three days. Mehta said several steps have been taken for stressed sectors. “Let the Central government, RBI and bankers should put

their heads together on the aspect of interest on interest,” he said. “The moratorium is extendable by two years,” he added. Mehta said that authorities have utilised the time and narrowed down the issue to the point on interest. “There are stressed sectors and national economy has contracted by 23 per cent,” Mehta said. — PTI

Jagan mulls farm power meters to get Modi funds

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC HYDERABAD, SEPT. 1

Reeling under severe financial crisis and committed to implementing populist schemes, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has decided to take a political gamble and implement drastic reforms to avail additional borrowings of ₹15,000 crore in the current fiscal. To begin with, the government on Tuesday announced that meters would be fixed to all agricultural pump sets and the direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme would be implemented wherein power subsidy would be paid to farmers who will pay the distribution companies. The pilot project in one district will be completed before December 31 and efforts would be made to implement the project throughout the state from the 2021-2022 financial year. The Chief Minister himself may get ready to bite the bullet by implementing the pilot project in his native YSR Kadapa district.

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

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

No money to pay employee salaries

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, SEPT. 1

The Andhra Pradesh government did not have funds in the exchequer on Tuesday to clear the entire salary bill of its employees and pensions on pay day.

With about ₹1,600 cr availed from the Reserve Bank of India through ways and means being disbursed to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy’s pet populist scheme of social pensions, finance managers were left with meagre funds to pay salaries.

Official sources told *Deccan Chronicle* that the government had been trying to mobilise ₹3,000 crore through open market borrowings in a day or two to fill its coffers. With revenues falling due to Covid-9 and burden of populist schemes increasing, the state economy has reached a precarious situation, sources added. As per the stringent

Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act cap on borrowings — three per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) — the state is permitted to borrow ₹3,000 crore for the current fiscal of 2020-21. Of this, it has already exhausted ₹23,000 crore in the first quarter. The government also resorted to out-of-budget borrowings of at least ₹12,000 crore so far.

Though the Centre relaxed FRBM norms and allowed another two per cent borrowings, 1.5 per cent will come with strings attached and only 0.5 per cent can be raised without restrictions. “Of the ₹5000 crore that can be borrowed without restrictions, we are raising ₹3,000 crore in a day or two,” a senior official said adding that another ₹2,000 crore can only be raised in the next seven months.

■ Page 2: State can borrow ₹35,000 crore

The Centre has relaxed the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act and permitted states to borrow up to five per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) against the present limit of three per cent. The Central government, however, insisted the states introduce reforms in power, urban local bodies, PDS sectors and ease of doing business to avail

the 1.5 per cent enhanced limit. Earlier, the state government had proposed to give an undertaking to implement prescribed reforms in the state but the Central government did not agree and insisted that the reforms should be put in place to avail the additional borrowing.

■ Page 2: Navaratnalu schemes drained money

FOREIGN SHIPS WITH CHEMICALS NEED PCB’S NOD

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

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

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

■ Page 2: Pressure on for a ban on chemical import

DIFFICULT | TIME

VADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, SEPT. 1

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

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

India beats back new Chinese bid

Accuses Chinese Army of trying to occupy strategic peaks on the Indian side of LAC

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 1

Chinese troops made a second failed attempt on Monday to capture peaks on the southern banks of the Pangong Tso that has emerged as the latest flash point between the two armies.

Indian troops had preempted the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers on Saturday night and occupied many peaks on the southern banks of the Pangong Tso to dominate the area.

“On 31st August, even as the ground commanders of the two sides were in discussions to de-escalate the situation, the Chinese troops again engaged in provocative action. Due to the timely defensive action, the Indian side was able to prevent these attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo,” said MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava on Tuesday.

According to sources, the Chinese Army on Monday night was trying to close in the area and they were spotted by the Indian troops. “PLA troops were suitably warned and they dissuaded from coming closer,” said sources.

Since May, the Chinese Army’s strategy has been to grab unoccupied land at the LAC in Ladakh sector. However, on the southern banks of Pangong Tso, as soon as they saw a large number of Chinese troops moving in, Indian troops on Saturday night moved fast to occupy many peaks in a “pre-emptive move”. Control of the peaks gives Indian the advantage to dominate the area as it can monitor the movements of Chinese troops.

China says India tried to alter LAC

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 1

China on Tuesday rejected India’s allegations against the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and accused India of violating its territorial sovereignty by trespassing the Line of Actual Control (LAC) at the southern bank of the Pangong Tso Lake and near the Requin Pass.

India, however, on Monday accused the Chinese Army of attempting to change the status quo at the southern bank of Pangong Tso Lake on the night of August 29 and 30.

Day after, the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi too claimed that Indian troops trespassed the LAC again at the southern bank of the Pangong Tso and near the Requin Pass in the western sector of China-India border.

The Chinese Embassy

added, “India’s move has grossly violated China’s territorial sovereignty, seriously violated relevant agreements, protocols and important consensus reached between the two countries, and severely damaged peace and tranquility along the border areas. What India has done runs counter to the efforts made by both sides for a period of time to ease and cool down the situation on the ground, and China is resolutely opposed to this.”

China claimed it “has made solemn representations to the Indian side, urged it to restrain its frontline troops, earnestly honour its commitments, stop all the provocative actions, withdraw its troops illegally trespassing the LAC, and stop any actions leading to the escalation and complication of the situation.”

The brigade level talks held on Tuesday to de-escalate the situation but it failed to achieve any breakthrough.

Since Monday, China has issued at least five statements accusing India of crossing the LAC at the southern bank of the Pangong Tso and near the Requin pass in the western sector. It asked India to withdraw its troops “illegally trespassing the Line of Actual Control, immediately stop any actions leading to the escalation and complication of the situation.”

Contradictory reports are coming about two peaks in the area: Blacktop and Helmet. While some reports said that Indian forces occupied these two heights in its pre-emptive move, others suggest that it is under PLA. These two peaks are reported to be on the Indian side of LAC.

The status of these two peaks could not be officially confirmed. Indian Army denied a news agency report that the Chinese Army had tried to cross LAC in the Chumar sector in Ladakh on Tuesday.

SC allows Voda, Airtel to pay AGR dues in 10 years

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, SEPT. 1

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

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

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

Shutting the door on any further litigation by TSPs seeking reassessment of their AGR dues, Justice Mishra, pronouncing the Supreme Court judgment, said: “That for the demands raised by the department of telecom in respect of AGR dues based

on the judgment of this court, there shall not be any dispute raised by any of the telecom operators and that there shall not be any reassessment.”

Issuing a slew of directions, Justice Mishra said the fate of the spectrum held by the companies facing insolvency proceedings — RCom, Aircel and Videocon — and the various questions associated with it will be decided by NCLT, a suggestion that was made to the court by senior counsel Harish Salve during the hearing, which Justice Mishra said has been accepted.

Son was forced to carry father’s body in rickshaw

Covid scare affects funerals

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

ailment in Eleswaram village of East Godavari. But, his community members or people of the village did not come forward to assist the family in performing the last rites. When family members contacted the village secretary and medical and health personnel, they

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

Finally in the evening, the son of the deceased hired a rickshaw and carried the body to the burial ground for performing the last rites. “Such incidents pain the heart. But we cannot do anything,” K. Ramesh, another Kirana merchant of the village said. He recounted when a relative of his died in Rajahmundry of Coronavirus, the body was carried to the burial ground with the help of some social volunteers, including Ameer Pasha. East Godavari Covid-19

nodal officer B. V. V. Satyanarayana said that if a patient dies of virus, the set protocols need to be followed. Panchayat personnel in villages or officials in municipalities have to disinfect the body and put it in a special package before carrying the body for last rites.

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

IN BRIEF PRESSURE ON FOR A BAN ON CHEMICAL IMPORTS

From Page 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

NAIDU TO DGP: LAW AND ORDER DECLINING IN STATE

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

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

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

POLICE ISSUES NOTICES TO TD LEADERS

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 1

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Jagan arrives in Kadapa to pay homage to YSR

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

NAGESWARA RAO
BALLEDA | DC
KADAPA, SEPT. 1

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

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

Deputy chief minister SB Amjad Basha along

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

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

with district collector Chevuri Harikiran, BC welfare minister Srinivasa Venugopal Krishna, SP K.K.N. Anburajan, Kamalapuram MLA Ravindranath Reddy, Railway Koduru MLA Koramutla Srinivasu and former Kadapa mayor Suresh

Babu welcomed the CM at the airport.

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

eddy Bhaskar Reddy, MLC Zakia Khanum, DCCB chairman Tirupal Reddy, former MLA Akepati Amarnath Reddy, prominent leaders Y.S. Manohar Reddy, Y.S. Madhusudan Reddy, Y.S. Abhishek Reddy.

About 1,000 police personnel have been deployed for the CM's security at Idupulapaya.

On Wednesday morning, Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy along with his family members will pay homage to his father and former chief minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy at YSR Ghat in Idupulapaya on his 11th death anniversary.

Boon for AP as Chennai firms plan to move out

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, SEPT. 1

Several Chennai-based entrepreneurs are looking for land in border districts of AP to shift their units.

The industrial estates were established about 40 years back in what was then the outskirts of Chennai, but they now find themselves surrounded by human habitations as the city expanded by leaps and bounds during the last three decades.

Pollution issues and declaration of Chennai as a smart city has prompted the Tamil Nadu government to force these small scale industries to move out.

Though the government has offered land in Cuddalore and Madurai districts for MSMEs, they wanted to be nearer to Chennai since it is a hub for skilled manpower and potential business opportunities.

It would be a golden opportunity for Andhra Pradesh, which is eagerly looking for industrial development, as most established MSMEs with considerable turnover and employment potential

are looking to move to border areas in the state. An Entrepreneur from famed Ambattur Industrial Estate in Chennai, Ramesh Aruvella said most of the MSMEs and SSIs located in seven industrial parks in TN capital will shift if the AP government provides plug and play facility and offer land at reasonable price.

He also requested the AP government to include the new parks under Bangalore-Chennai Industrial Corridor.

Mr Ramesh suggested that AP develop 1,300 acres of DKT lands available at Nindra in Pichatur

mandal of Chittoor district as industrial park as it is located very close to Chennai as well as Tirupati.

There was a proposal to set up an industrial park at Nindra in 2019, he noted. The other potential location suggested by him is Kosala Nagaram near Tiruttani where 1,500 acres is available and it is also very near to Chennai and connected by road and rail facilities.

While welcoming SSIs/MSMEs of Chennai to AP, industries and IT minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy said they were ready to offer land with necessary infrastructure with a condition that their registered office should be in AP.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, he said he had a meeting with a delegation of industrialists including Mr Ramesh from Chennai two days back.

“As per my advice, they have visited the SEZ at Menakauru near Naidupeta where 600 acres of developed land is available with necessary infrastructure,” Mr Reddy said adding that they would offer land wherever they choose.

ENVIRONMENT | PROTECTION

Panel to inspect the area in question and submit report by October 13 to NGT

NGT to ascertain mangrove damage in Kakinada

VADREVV SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, SEPT. 1

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

The NGT said the committee would inspect the area in question and submit a factual as well as action taken report. The committee should submit its report on or before October 13 by e-filing to the NGT.

The committee would

comprise a senior officer from the regional office of the Union environment, forest and climate change ministry, Chennai, a senior officer from the AP Coastal Zone Management Authority (APCZMA), a senior officer not below the rank of chief conservator of forest to be designated by the principal chief conservator of forest, Andhra Pradesh, and a divisional forest officer from the Coringa wildlife sanctuary.

If there is any violation found, including assessment of environmental compensation, it will recommend

remedial measures to be taken to restore the damage caused to the environment.

Retired IAS officer E.A.S. Sarma and others had filed a petition before the NGT against the Centre and others, alleging that the GMR/ECPL plant, opposite the offices of the Coast Guard and the AP Maritime Board, despite specific conditions in the coastal regulation zone (CRZ) clearances and environmental clearance conditions that dredged materials should not be dumped near the mangroves and mudflats, were

Govt gears up to take back unutilised lands given to firms

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 1

The state government is preparing grounds to take back unutilised industrial and D-form lands given to organisations and individuals for generating employment opportunities for youth.

According to sources in revenue department and Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC), the state government has allotted around 87,000 acres of land during the last two decades to various enterprises for creating employment opportunities, including 36,000 acres of D-form lands given to individuals for self-employment purposes.

However, industries, organisations and trusts that had been allotted lands have failed in creating employment despite making an assurance in this regard when signing memoranda of understandings (MoUs) with the state government. At the same time, following rapid urbanisation, majority of industrial as

● **THOUSANDS OF** acres of misused D-form lands have been identified.

● **87,000 ACRES** of land had been to industries and enterprises for creating job opportunities for youth. But no employment has been generated.

● **OPERATIONS TO** take back such lands will start from January 1, 2021.

well D-form lands been sold by the beneficiary organisations and individuals.

When lands were allotted, there were specific conditions that they will not be sold or commercialised. Another undertaking was that there will be no permanent constructions on these lands. It has come to the notice of authorities that majority of D-form lands have been commercialised or misutilised. Similarly, entrepreneurs, companies and industries too had been allotted huge extent of lands at very cheap rates, lands for starting various units and creating employment for youth.

The Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government is now keen to revive the measures to take back the allotted lands. Takeover of these lands is expected to start from January 1, 2021.

CBI told to submit report on case against doc on Nov. 11

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

The AP High Court on Tuesday directed the CBI to submit a complete report by November 11, in a case registered against suspended government doctor Dr Sudhakar on charges of assaulting police, and posted the next hearing on November 16.

The CBI sought more time to take up a detailed inquiry alleging conspiracy angle in the case and the court granted its request.

Dr Sudhakar who worked at the area hospital at Narsipatnam in Visakhapatnam district was suspended for his critical remarks against Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy and the state government on alleged shortage of N95 masks and PPE kits. Subsequently, he was involved in a case of assault on police in Visakhapatnam.

The High Court took up his case suo moto and directed the CBI to take up inquiry and submit its report.

HC lifts prohibitory order against judge

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

The AP High Court on Tuesday suspended the 10-day prohibitory order issued against junior civil judge S. Ramakrishna by the B. Kotha Kota mandal tahsildar. The court observed that the order affected his personal freedom and freedom of expression and directed the state government to file a counter affidavit.

The prohibitory order restrained the judge, who has been under suspension in a separate case, and his neighbour D. Venkata Reddy, from entering on the pathway leading to the house of

the former, following a dispute between them. The neighbours filed cases against each other at B. Kotha Kota police station. Tahsildar D. Hari Kumar served notices on both of them under section 145 of CrPC prohibiting them from entering on the disputed pathway.

Mr Ramakrishna's counsel Sravan Kumar filed a case in the High Court challenging the order. Hearing the case, the court said that serving such orders would result in denial of individual freedom and freedom of expression.

The court directed the government to file a counter affidavit in 10 days.

40-day Amaravati Deeksha

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

An innovative 40-day Amaravati deeksha, like Ayyappa, Venkateswara and other religious deekshas, has been instituted, seeking continuation of Amaravati as the solo capital of the state.

Pro-Amaravati farmers have undertaken this Amaravati deeksha, under which they hope to bring awareness among the masses about the need for Amaravati to be the capital as a growth engine for development of the state over 40 days.

Farmers in Amaravati have been protesting for the past 259 days in several forms under which they conducted a devotional yatra to the Durga temple and performed penances for Amaravati. Alluri Yugandhar B. Sudharani, Teliprolu Srinivas, K. Dharmendra, T. Paramjyothi, Avala Venkateswara Rao, all farmers, TD leader, A. Kiran, and others lamented that the state government turned a deaf ear to their demand of cancelling the three capitals decision and continuing with Amaravati as the solo capital.

Panel to inspect the area in question and submit report by October 13 to NGT

Responsibility needs to be fixed and action initiated against the government and respondents for having omitted to take any action against the discharge of dredge spoil into the mangroves causing the death of the mangroves in the area.

The NGT felt that a substantial environmental stake requires it to intervene as damages caused to mangroves and mudflats will be irreversibly destructive. Any violation of the CRZ notification also will have deleterious ramifications on the coastal zone as well.

Sarma appealed to the NGT to direct the government and the respondents to restore the area to its original condition by removing the bund in order to clear the dredging spoils and conserve rest of the habitat. He said the ‘polluter pays’ principle must be applied in this case.

Sarma also requested the NGT to fix responsibility and initiate action against those who started the illegal dredging and discharge of dredge spoils into the mangroves, in violation of CRZ notifications of 2011 and 2018.



SHORT TAKES

3 PAWAN FANS ELECTROCUTED IN KUPPAM

AVINASH P SUBRAMANYAM |
DC
TIRUPATI, SEP. 1

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

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

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

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

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

COPS SEIZE WEED OIL AT PENDURTHY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 1

The City Task Force personnel on Tuesday seized 895 grams of weed oil from a man driving a motorcycle at Pendurthy Junction. The cost of the oil could be around, ₹1.5 lakh, the raiding personnel said. The accused absconded from the scene and dropped his Aadhaar card xerox copy. The Task Force personnel handed over the oil and photocopy of the Aadhaar of the accused to the station house office of Pendurthy police station.

In another raid, the CTF personnel raided RK Park in HB Colony where six persons were playing cards for money. The personnel seized ₹14,640 in cash from them and handed them over to MVP Colony Police station for further action.

MEDICAL COLLEGE AT VIMS, SAYS VIJAYA SAI

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 1

Rajya Sabha member and senior YSRC party member V. Vijaya Sai Reddy said that medical college and other institutions would soon come up at Visakha Institute of Medical College (VIMS), located on the National Highway close to Old Dairy Farm in Visakhapatnam.

The MP, along with tourism minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao, Lok Sabha member M.V.V. Satyanarayana, collector and other officials visited VIMS on Tuesday afternoon. VIMS is the top Covid hospital in north coastal Andhra treating critical Covid patients from the three districts of the region.

Appreciating the services at the hospital, Mr Reddy said it was the vision of Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy who had a mission to establish medical facilities at strategic points of the State. After his untimely demise, the hospital was neglected, and at one stage, the previous government wanted to privatise the institution.

“Now we are focussing on VIMS, and we are planning to establish a medical college and some key research institutions in the campus,” Mr Reddy said.

He said VIMS now has 302 beds with 12 ICU wards having 16 beds in each ward and 10 isolation wards. Appreciating the efforts of VIMS director Dr Satya Vara Prasad, the MP said that working for six hours wearing PPE kits was no simple task.

All the posts of doctors, nurses, lab technicians and data entry operators would be filled soon, he added. The MP also visited King George Hospital and other Covid hospitals in the city.

● He said VIMS now has 302 beds with 12 ICU wards having 16 beds in each ward and 10 isolation wards. Appreciating the efforts of VIMS director Dr Satya Vara Prasad, the MP said that working for six hours wearing PPE kits was no simple task.

Rush hour



A student runs to the exam centre for writing the JEE at Kundavari Kandrika in Vijayawada on Tuesday.
— C. NARAYANA RAO

JEE exams held at 52 centres

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

State registers 10,368 new Covid-19 cases, 84 deaths

E. Godavari has been severely affected, with 60,611 Covid cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

Andhra Pradesh has registered 10,368 new Covid-19 cases, raising the overall tally to 4,45,139, apart from 84 deaths, taking the death toll to 4,053 in the last 24 hours.

State health authorities released a Covid-19 bulletin here on Tuesday reporting that out of 59,834 samples tested, 10,368 individuals have been found to be infected with Coronavirus. Out of a total of 37,82,746 samples tested so far, 3,39,876 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 1,01,210 patients are undergoing treatment in various hospitals.

Among new confirmed Covid-19 infections, East Godavari tops the state by registering the highest number of 1,208 cases, followed by 1,068 in Chittoor, 1,059 in Nellore, 994 in Kadapa, 948 in West Godavari, 888 in Prakasam, 825 in Visakhapatnam, 813 in Kurnool, 629 in Srikakulam, 617 in Guntur, 552 in Vizianagaram, 456 in

Anantapur and 311 in Krishna.

East Godavari has been severely affected, registering a total number of 60,611 cases of Coronavirus, followed by 45,558 in Kurnool, 41,584 in Anantapur, 38,054 in West Godavari, 37,717 in Chittoor, 37,519 in Visakhapatnam, 36,378 in Guntur, 31,739 in Nellore, 27,113 in Kadapa, 24,707 in Srikakulam, 23,718 in Prakasam, 20,951 in Vizianagaram, 16,595 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery of Covid-19 infected patients has been good in East Godavari with discharge of 41,286 patients, followed by 38,550 in Kurnool, 35,464 in Anantapur, 33,503 in West Godavari, 30,065 in Visakhapatnam, 28,434 in Guntur, 28,198 in Chittoor, 24,562 in Nellore, 19,510 in Kadapa, 17,842 in Srikakulam, 14,073 in Krishna, 12,795 in Vizianagaram, 12,699 in Prakasam, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Chittoor has recorded

the highest number of 14 deaths due to Covid-19 in a single day, followed by 11 in West Godavari, 10 in East Godavari, seven each in Anantapur, Guntur and Visakhapatnam, six in Nellore, five in Kadapa, four each in Krishna, Kurnool and Srikakulam, three in Prakasam and two in Vizianagaram.

Among cumulative deaths, Chittoor takes the lead with 429, followed by 401 in East Godavari, 383 in Guntur, 382 in Kurnool, 337 in Anantapur, 318 in West Godavari, 300 in Nellore, 296 in Visakhapatnam, 297 in Prakasam, 282 in Krishna, 247 in Srikakulam, 225 in Kadapa and 166 in Vizianagaram.

The state health authorities have in all discharged 9,350 patients after recovery during the last 24 hours.

AP has carried out Covid-19 tests on 70,838 samples per one million population, recording a Covid-19 positive rate of 11.77.

Maharashtra has tested 33,188 samples with a pos-

1.42 LAKH COVID-19 PATIENTS SHIFTED IN 108 AMBULANCES

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEP. 1

Twenty eight health workers from the 108 service were felicitated for their relentless service by AP Madya Vimochana Prachara committee on Tuesday.

The 108 ambulance service is rendering good service in the pandemic. 108 service CEO, M. Sai Swaroop, said that 108 ambulance has served Covid-19 patients well, with 1.42 lakh patients shifted to hospitals in them in Andhra Pradesh.

MVPC chairperson, Vallamreddy Lakshmana Reddy, felicitated 28 health warriors selected from 13 districts of the state in Guntur on Tuesday on the eve of 11th death anniversary of former chief minister Rajasekhara Reddy. Addressing the occa-

sion, Swaroop said that another 82,000 patients ailing from various diseases were also shifted in 108 ambulances for treatment. He said that Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy provided 4,000 new jobs through expansion of the 108 ambulance service this years which is very helpful to the public.

Principal advisor to the government, Ajay Kallam, stated that the aim of the political parties which come into power should be good services to the people and Rajasekhara Reddy is the best example of someone who followed this dictum. He recalled that he submitted a report to the him stating increased debts, unavailability of education, medical facilities and irrigation water as the main causes of suicides of 7,000 farmers during the year 1997.

itive rate of 19.12 while Telangana has tested

34,748 cases with a positive rate of 9.15.

Efforts on to bring down Covid death rate: Health secretary

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

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

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

● 217 hospitals have set up help desks and display boards to give information on availability of beds

slackened their efforts to save the lives of Coronavirus patients. They were identifying patients with severe symptoms and providing them treatment in the nearby hospitals. If the problem was severe, they were being shifted to Covid hospitals for better

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

Anantapur, Kurnool, Guntur, Krishna and Vizianagaram were recording less number of Covid-19 cases, while Nellore, Prakasam and Srikakulam were registering high number of

cases, said Mr Jawahar Reddy.

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

He said that so far the 104 call centre received 14,916 calls and resolved 14,399 of them and 221 hospitals were attending to Covid-19 patients. According him, 217 hospitals have set up help desks and display boards to give information on availability of beds.

Cancel CPS, demand govt saff

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

The Andhra Pradesh government employees association (APGEA), the AP NGO Association and other employee associations and unions staged a protest demanding the cancellation of the contributory pension scheme (CPS), warning about intensifying protests for the reimposition of the old pension scheme (OPS).

APGEA state president, K.R. Suryanarayana, has demanded that the state government immediately scrap the CPS as assured by Chief Minister, Y.S.

Jagan Mohan Reddy, during his padayatra. Addressing the media here on Tuesday to mark 16 years of the fight for the scrapping of CPS and implementing the old pension scheme, the association members held a meeting and discussed the efforts being made to put pressure on the government to scrap the CPS.

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

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

He said employees work as a bridge between the government and the people, have worked with a lot of dedication and deserve decent pensions. Under the CPS, the governments do not contribute their share in the pension on par with the contribution made by the employees, said Suryanarayana, adding that the pension amount is deposited into mutual funds under the CPS. He questioned the future of the employees if the

mutual fund companies become bankrupt.

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

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



Water still flows waste into sea

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |
DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 1

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

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

Water resources authorities say that nearly 2,200 tmc ft of water has been discharged into the sea from June, and nearly 22.5 to 23 lakh cusecs of water have been discharged from the barrage during the peak flood period for several days.

As water levels at Bhadrachalam are rising again, and recorded at 38.40 ft with a discharge of 6.06 lakh cusecs at 6 pm, authorities are expecting the water level at the Cotton barrage to rise and the present discharge of 2.5 lakh to go up to 8 lakh from the early hours of Wednesday onwards.

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

Up to three tmc ft of water can be stored in the pond at the barrage. Nearly 200 to 300 tmc ft of water can be

utilised for cultivation of crops by releasing water through distributary canals — eastern, western and central delta canals — in Godavari district.

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

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

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

Polavaram project chief engineer B. Sudhakar Babu said, “Once the floodwater recedes at the project area, we will resume work. We are also trying to get workers from Chhattisgarh, Odisha and other areas back to work.”

AP DRONE CORP TO SURVEY ENDOWMENTS' LAND

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEP. 1

Department of endowments has engaged the services of the Drone Corporation of Andhra Pradesh to conduct a detailed survey of its lands in order to clear pending claims of over 200 private persons seeking NOCs for the lands brought under its fold under Section 22A (1)C of the Registration Act.

Endowments commissioner P Arjun Rao said at least 206 applications seeking NOCs were pending. The applicants approached the department as they were unable to either sell their lands or execute gift deeds in favour of their kin because of dispute over the ownership.

Mr Arjuna Rao said that as a first step towards this, his department engaged the services of the Drone Corporation of AP to conduct a detailed survey to clear the pending claims.

A team of officials from endowments and survey departments will assist the DCAP in this regard. He stated that the survey was expected to be completed in a month after which endowments officials would visit districts to conduct a special drive to issue NOCs.

RAYALASEEMA GETS MORE SRISAILAM WATER

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, SEPT. 1

With both power plants at Srisaillam shut down, the inflows into Srisaillam are drained out into Pothireddy padu regulator. Out of 32,826 cusecs of inflows, 33,626 cusecs were let out to the Rayalaseema districts.

Pothireddy padu head regulator is drawing 30,000 cusecs while 2,026 cusecs was pumped out to Malyal-Handri Neeva Sujala Sravanti scheme.

NAME CORRECTION

Mr. KOTTAKOTA HARISH, S/o KOTTAKOTA MADHU KUMAR, aged 24 years, resident of Door No.17-56, B.S. Colony, Sompeta Town and Post, Sompeta Mandal, Srikakulam Dist., Andhra Pradesh, India declare are under: He was citizen of India. His Educational Records bears his name as “KOTTAKOTA HARISH” which is his correct name. That by mistake his name has been mentioned in his Pass Port as “KOTHAKOTA HARISH” (incorrect name) and also his parents MADHU KUMAR (Father) and LAKSHMI (Mother) names. This is also to categorically stated that his correct name as “KOTTAKOTA HARISH”



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SHORT TAKES

19 KG OF TUSKS SEIZED IN KEONJHAR

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

SENA WELCOMES AMBEDKAR’S TEMPLE DEMAND

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, SEPT. 1

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

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

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

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

JEE MAINS HELD AMID STRINGENT PRECAUTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

ARMY HITS UPON ‘HUGE’ ARMS CACHE ALONG LoC

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, SEPT. 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT 1

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

“GDP — 23.9. The ruining of the country’s economy began with demonetisation. Since then, the government introduced one erroneous policy after another,” former Congress president Rahul Gandhi tweeted on Tuesday.

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

NEW | LAW

Certificates are only for applying for jobs and do not confer right to own land

J&K issues over 12.5L domicile certificates

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, SEPT. 1

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

However allaying these fears, a senior government official said here on Tuesday that the new domicile certificates were only for applying for jobs and do not confer rights to own land.

“The new domicile cer-



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

- PTI

HC quashes Kafeel Khan’s illegal detention under NSA

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

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

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

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

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

● **KHAN HAS** been in jail since January after he delivered the allegedly provocative speech at the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) during the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests in December last year. He is lodged in Mathura jail.

● **UNDER THE NSA**, a person can be detained without a charge for up to 12 months if authorities are satisfied that he or she is a threat to national security or law and order.

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

Quashing Khan’s detention order, the court said, “A complete reading of the speech prima facie does not disclose any effort to promote hatred or violence. It also no where threatens peace and tranquility of the city of Aligarh. The address gives a call for national integrity and unity among the citizens. The speech also deprecates any kind of violence. It appears that the District Magistrate had selective reading and selective mention for few phrases from the speech ignoring its true intent.”

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

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

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

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

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

The court said it had also tested the legality of the detention on the count of giving effective opportunity to the detainee to represent at earliest.

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

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

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

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

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

“The record shown to us and the pleadings of the petition also refer that only radiograms relating to decision of the State Government for extension of the term of detention were supplied to the detainee,” it said.

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

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

In its order, the court said, “The writ petition for the reasons above is allowed. The order of detention dated 13th February, 2020 passed by District Magistrate, Aligarh and confirmed by the State of Uttar Pradesh is set aside. The extension of the period of detention of detainee Dr. Kafeel Khan is also declared illegal.”

“A writ in the nature of habeas corpus is hereby issued to release Dr. Kafeel Khan, the detainee, from State custody forthwith,” it said.

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

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

- PTI

SC: ONLY PURE MILK TO BE USED FOR JYOTIRLINGA

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, SEPT. 1

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

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

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

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

Besides, the court ordered to shun the practice of treating the Jyotirlingam with ‘panchamruta’, made of milk, ghee, liquid jiggery and honey.

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

POWERFUL NAGALAND GB FEDERATION WRITES TO PM

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, SEPT. 1

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

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

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

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

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



IN BRIEF

10 guards hostage in Guatemalan jail

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

Earthquake hits northern Chile

Santiago: A magnitude 6.8 earthquake struck near the coast of Northern Chile on Tuesday, the GFZ German Research Center for Geosciences said, and some damage and minor landslides were reported in areas near the epicentre, according to local media. A number of people living near the coast were evacuated as a precaution, according to BNO News. There were no reports of casualties. GFZ reported aftershocks of around magnitudes 6.2 and 5.5. There was no tsunami threat from the earthquake, according to the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre. GFZ earlier showed the magnitude as 7, with the quake at a depth of 10 km (6.2 miles). Chile is on the Pacific Ring of Fire, an arc of fault lines circling the Pacific Basin which is prone to frequent earthquakes. In June, a magnitude 6.8 earthquake had struck Chile’s mineral-rich northern desert. Damage in that quake was minimal.

Japan typhoon heads to Korea

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

TALIBAN HIT MILITARY BASE, KILL 3

Kabul, Sept. 1: Taliban insurgents launched a complex attack on Tuesday morning against a military base in eastern Afghanistan, killing at least three Afghan public protection forces, an official said. Five other forces were wounded in the attack, said Abdul Rahman Mangal, a spokesman for the governor in Paktia province of the country. A suicide car bomber targeted the entrance gate of the base in the provincial capital Gardes then two gunmen started shooting at the Afghan security forces, Mangal said.

Security forces killed both attackers in a gunbattle lasting almost 10 minutes and the area is now under control, he added. A Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said the group claimed responsibility for the attack in Gardes. The attack comes after Afghanistan’s president appointed 46 members to a council for national reconciliation, which will have final say on whether the government will sign a peace deal with the Taliban after what are expected to be protracted and uncertain negotiations with the insurgents. The negotiations were envisaged under a US-Taliban peace agreement signed in February as intra-Afghan talks to decide the country’s future.

Israeli knee on Palestinian neck



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

Outrage as cops shoot, kill another PoC in LA

Los Angeles, Sept. 1: US police shot dead another PoC, who they said had a handgun but dropped it during a violent altercation in Los Angeles, sparking further outrage as tensions soared around racism and police brutality. The man, named in local media as Dijon Kizzee, 29, was riding his bike when Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Deputies attempted to arrest him for an unspecified vehicle code violation Monday.

He fled on foot and, when officers caught up with him, he punched an assistant in the face, dropping clothes he was wearing, police said. “MPs noticed that inside the clothes he dropped was a black semi-automatic handgun, at that time a shootout involving a deputy took place,” Lt. Brandon Dean said.

It was not clear if the man was looking for the weapon when he was shot. Dean said officials have yet to interview MPs involved. “So he didn’t have the gun in his hand, it had already fallen to the ground, so when he was actually shot he wasn’t armed at the time?” asked a reporter during the televised press conference. “I don’t know that,” Dean replied, later adding, “If this individual was looking for a semi-automatic handgun, I would suggest... that’s probably why lethal force was used.” The man was pronounced dead at the scene. Up to 100 people gathered at the scene to demand justice within hours of the shooting, according to local media.

“What good is the prison system if you want to kill

HOUSE TO SUBPOENA POSTMASTER GENERAL OVER MAIL DISRUPTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Detentions resume in Belarus

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

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

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

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. Several organisers of strikes at top industrial plants have been detained. On Tuesday, people start-

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

WHO’S NEXT? Sep. 14 vote will pick leader after Abe decided to step down over poor health

Party manoeuvres to pick Japan’s next PM

Tokyo, Sept. 1: With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announcing his plans to step down due to health reasons, members of his ruling party are furiously maneuvering ahead of an internal vote that will ultimately decide his successor. Executives of Abe’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party met Tuesday and decided that the September 14 vote for party leader — and with it almost assuredly prime minister — will be limited to lawmakers and not broader members of the party.

Some younger lawmakers had called for the latter

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

dates, who have either announced their intention to run or are expected to do so: Yoshihide Suga: Japan’s top government spokesman and Abe’s longtime right-hand man, the 71-year-old Suga has emerged as the favourite among ruling party heavyweights. Suga has been pegged by the party secretary general as the best caretaker who can ensure the continuation of Abe’s policies. The son of a farmer in the northern prefecture of Akita, Suga is a self-made politician, rare in Japan’s largely hereditary world of politics. As chief cabinet

secretary, Suga is a policy coordinator and advisor to Abe. He is also the public face of Abe’s government, doing twice-daily televised media briefings. He’s become known as “Uncle Reiwa” after he was tasked with unveiling the new imperial era name for Emperor Naruhito last year. Suga has been a loyal supporter of Abe since his first stint as prime minister from 2006-2007 and helped his return to power in 2012. Suga had previously denied that he would run, but on Monday simply said he would not comment. Fumio Kishida: Abe’s fo-

Tug leaving wreck sinks, 3 sailors die

It was responding to Mauritius oil spill

Johannesburg, Sept. 1: The oil spill disaster off Mauritius turned deadly this week when a tugboat leaving the shipwreck collided with a barge and sank, killing at least three sailors, police said Tuesday. The tug was towing the empty barge from the stranded hull of the Japanese ship, the MV Wakashio, on Monday night when heavy seas rammed the barge into the tug. It sank off the northeast coast of the Indian Ocean island nation, near a village called Poudre D’or. Four sailors were rescued and one is missing, said Mauritius police constable Jordan Jason Sunasy. “It is a terrible twist in this disaster,” environmental consultant Sunil Dowarkasing said.

“The consequences of the shipwreck has now taken human lives. The cost of the oil spill keeps mounting.” The tugboat sank in deep water outside a coral reef and so far no oil has been seen on the coast, Dowarkasing said. The environmental disaster began on July 25

● **THE ENVIRONMENTAL** disaster began on July 25 when the Japanese bulk carrier MV Wakashio strayed miles off course and struck a coral reef a mile offshore.

when the bulk carrier Wakashio strayed miles off course and struck a coral reef a mile offshore.

After being pounded by heavy surf for nearly two weeks, the ship’s hull cracked and on August 6 it began leaking fuel into the Mahebourg Lagoon, polluting a protected wetlands area and a small island that was a bird and wildlife sanctuary.

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

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

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

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

Mass testing for virus in HK amid public doubts

Hong Kong, Sept. 1: Hong Kong tested thousands of people for Coronavirus on Tuesday at the start of a mass-testing effort that’s become another political flash point in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory. Volunteers stood in lines at some of the more than 100 testing centres, though many residents are distrustful over the resources and staff being provided by China’s central government and some have expressed fear DNA could be collected.

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

Children in Wuhan return to school

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

local transmission for weeks.

It’s class time again across Europe

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

Graft charges: Saudi Arabia sacks 2 royals

Riyadh, Sept. 1: A top Saudi military commander and his son were sacked on Monday over graft allegations, state media said, in the government’s latest anti-corruption purge.

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

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

He was replaced by Mutaq bin Salim, the deputy chief of staff, on the recommendation of the kingdom’s de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed

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

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

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

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

SURRENDER BY SEPT. 10: COURT TELLS NAWAZ

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 1

Pakistan’s Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday ordered former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to surrender before till September 10, in appeals pertaining to Al-Azizia Steel Mills and Avenfield property references. The bench remarked that the court wanted to give an opportunity to the former prime minister to surrender and appear, before being declared absconder.

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

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

PAK COURT TO INDICT ZARDARI ON SEPT. 9

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

DECCAN Chronicle

2 SEPTEMBER 2020

Only long-term measures can resuscitate economy

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

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

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

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

Bhushan's choice

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

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

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

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Subhani



Delimitation next stop in govt's Kashmir project

Riyaz Wani

Ever since Narendra Modi government stripped J&K of its semi-autonomous status in August last, the decision has invariably been explained as the outcome of the BJP's push to fulfil its longstanding ideological agenda and electoral promise. It was certainly about that but only in a rhetorical sense. In its implementation on the ground since then, the decision has come across as an elaborate and minutely-thought-through plan of action that seeks to fundamentally alter the facts on the ground to end the lingering conflict on this side of the Line of Control. And in that sense the withdrawal of the former state's special status and the actions undertaken over the past year form an ambitiously envisioned alternative settlement formula for Kashmir.

This formula is not about resolving the Kashmir issue as we know it: a dispute between India and Pakistan going back to Partition and the one arising from a decades-long separatist struggle in the region. There is no plan underway to talk to Pakistan or to the dissenting political and militant groups in J&K to arrive at a solution. On the contrary, the effort is to enforce a unilateral solution — a merger of J&K into India — without taking Kashmiris or Pakistanis on board.

And this solution, if we go by the constitutional and legal changes ushered in over the last year, operates along two axes: one, a demographic shift being brought about by throwing J&K open to settlement by outsiders and another by altering the nature of the political representation through the delimitation of the constituencies that has already been initiated.

According to new domicile law, issued on April 1, anyone who has

been a resident of Kashmir for 15 years will get the residency rights. The law applies retrospectively. For central government officials, the period is 10 years and for students it is only seven years. According to 2011 census there are 28 lakh migrant labourers in J&K other than lakhs of security personnel and thousands of central government employees, a significant number of whom have become eligible for residency rights should they wish to settle down in the former state.

As for the delimitation, the BJP has made no secret of its desire to enhance the number of Assembly seats to Jammu region. Before J&K's bifurcation into two Union territories — J&K and Ladakh — its Assembly had 87 seats of which predominantly Muslim majority Kashmir Valley had 47 seats, Hindu majority Jammu 37 and the now separated Ladakh with a slim Muslim majority four seats. Now according to the delimitation, that in normal course was due to be held in 2026, seven new seats are being added to the Assembly, most of which, if not all, are expected to go to Jammu.

This has the potential to shift the region's political centre away from Kashmir Valley to Jammu, turning in the words of J&K's former finance minister Haseeb Drabu “a demographic majority into a political minority”. Of the 13.6 million living in J&K, according to Census 2011, 68.3 per cent are

Delimitation has the potential to shift the region's political centre away from Kashmir Valley to Jammu, turning in the words of Haseeb Drabu 'a demographic majority into a political minority'

Other than the main aim of eradication of separatist struggle, the withdrawal of J&K autonomy and legislative changes introduced since have a larger objective: to reclaim Kashmir from Islam

Muslim and Hindus are 30 per cent. While Kashmir is 97 per cent Muslim, Jammu is 65 per cent Hindu and 31 per cent Muslim.

The simultaneously applied twin policies of the progressive dilution of the existing demographic composition and the shift in political representation away from Kashmir Valley to Jammu is geared to contain and eventually stamp out the separatism in Kashmir. First, a demographically altered J&K evenly split between Muslims and Hindus and slowly on way to becoming a Hindu majority is deemed to commensurately reduce the footprint of separatist resistance, marginalising it to a point of little more than a pinprick. Second, a J&K government where Hindu majority Jammu is an equal stakeholder and later probably a majority partner will be decisively aligned against separatism, unlike the existing Kashmir-dominated political structure that is largely perceived to be playing to separatist sentiment in the Valley and parts of Muslim dominated areas of Jammu.

Other than the main aim of eradication of separatist struggle, the withdrawal of J&K autonomy and the legislative changes introduced since then are understood to have a larger civilisational objective: to reclaim, what some observers in the Valley contend, Kashmir from Islam. In RSS imaginary, the seven centuries of Muslim history are an aberration and it is time the region returned to its civilisational motherhood.

These are ambitious aims and the BJP knows it. That is why it revoked the Article 370 within the first three months of its second

term so that it gets the sufficient time to implement the plan. Over the past year, Modi government has been in a tearing hurry to bring one after another legislative and administrative measure to cast Kashmir in a premeditated image, the PM Modi has called Naya Kashmir. In its way, however, will be the anticipated lingering resistance in the Valley, Pakistan's recurrent roadblocks and many a geopolitical complication. But after going the whole hog with erasing the former state's autonomy and bifurcating it into federally administered areas — J&K and Ladakh — there will possibly be no looking back for New Delhi under Modi. Its goal will be to lead its Kashmir project to its logical conclusion in the remaining period of its term. So, contrary to expectations among some sections of people in Kashmir, the statehood for J&K may not be restored anytime soon. The reason is this gives central government a direct control over the region and, in turn, freedom to make any administrative or legislative changes to accomplish its goal within the time-frame of its ongoing tenure.

Tailpiece: On July 20 last year, just a fortnight before the withdrawal of Article 370 that granted J&K its semi-autonomous within India, defence minister Rajnath Singh on his visit to Kargil War Memorial in Drass sector declared that the resolution of Kashmir issue was on the cards and that “no power on the earth can stop it”. At the time Mr Singh shared no details about this solution. But the situation since has made it amply clear what he meant. The BJP is out to execute its own extreme version of Kashmir solution in the teeth of Pakistan and resistance in Kashmir. And if its actions over the past year are anything to go by, it seems to have already covered a lot of ground.

The writer is a freelance journalist based out of Kashmir. He has received the Ramnath Goenka and Mumbai Press Club awards for his reportage.

LETTERS

COVID GST

As service charges are in the purview of the GST, giving receipts to the customer for the actual amounts is mandatory and avoiding is liable for criminal action. A CBI probe against all the hospitals is required without exemption. People in AP and TS are dreading the hospitals than the dreaded Covid.

K. Suryanarayana
Vizag

₹1 FINE

By levying a fine of ₹1 on lawyer-activist Prashant Bhushan for contempt of court, the Supreme Court has shown its magnanimity and generosity (*SC fines Bhushan ₹1 for contempt, DC, Sept. 1*). Bhushan has gratefully accepted the same. Hopefully, with this, the issue will be put to rest.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Hyderabad

The Supreme Court seems to have set a precedent by imposing a fine of ₹1 for contempt of court. On one hand the judge opines that Bhushan denigrating judiciary was “very serious” but on the other he fines him just ₹1. Henceforth more and more people would just do the same as Bhushan did, pay the paltry fine of ₹1 and get away with it. What a way out? Where are we headed? Just because Bhushan is a high-profile practising lawyer he is let off like this. I am sure a common man committing such a “very serious” would not get this luxury.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

Opening of Vivekananda rock memorial today

KANYAKUMARI, September 1 SEVENTY-SEVEN years ago, this day Swami Vivekananda delivered his historic speech in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago.

Synchronising with this day, President V. V. Giri will inaugurate Vivekananda Rock Memorial here at 9.30 am.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi will preside. In a press statement, Mr. Eknath Ranade, informs that Shrimat Swami Vireswarananda, president of the Ramakrishna Mission and Math, Belur, will participate in the inaugural function and give his benediction. A few hours before the function, he will perform the consecration ceremony of the Vivekananda Mandapam with traditional rituals which will commence before the day dawns and will be over by 7 a.m., Mr Ranade informed.

The committee, he added, expects over two lakhs of people, representing almost all districts in the country, to visit Kanyakumari.

function and give his benediction. A few hours before the function, he will perform the consecration ceremony of the Vivekananda Mandapam with traditional rituals which will commence before the day dawns and will be over by 7 a.m., Mr Ranade informed.

The committee, he added, expects over two lakhs of people, representing almost all districts in the country, to visit Kanyakumari.

Dilip Cherian



Dilli Ka Babu

Kumar, the new EC, is likely to run 2024 polls

Former finance secretary Rajiv Kumar has been named the new election commissioner. He replaces Ashok Lavasa, who is leaving to join the Asian Development Bank as vice-president. While Sunil Arora is the chief election commissioner, the other election commissioner is Sushil Chandra.

The importance of this announcement lies in the fact that Rajiv Kumar will likely be CEC during the next general elections in 2024! The current CEC Sunil Arora's tenure will end in April next year, following which Sushil Chandra will replace him as the next CEC. Chandra's term will end in May 2022, paving the way for Rajiv Kumar.

Rajiv Kumar has more than 30 years experience in public policy

and administration in several sectors. He was appointed finance secretary in July last year and his stint ended earlier this year in February. He is known to have worked on many key aspects of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan of financial inclusion through such flagship policies as Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and Mudra loan scheme, among others.

LATERAL ENTRY IN CAT SOUP It's hard to keep a whistleblower and internationally lauded babu down. The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) has issued notices to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the Uttarakhand government alleging that the scheme for lateral entry into bureaucracy is flawed and biased.

The notices follow an application by Indian Forest Service officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi seeking quashing of the 360-degree appraisal system and restraining the Centre from filling up joint secretary-level posts through the “contract system”.

Sources say that the case dates to 2017 when the Modi sarkar initiated the process for lateral entry into bureaucracy on a contract basis. Following this, the Centre appointed nine professionals, including actor Manoj Bajpai's brother Sujit Kumar Bajpai, from the private sector as joint secretaries in the central government in 2019.

Stating that the present system of recruitment of joint secretary level post through contract system is completely arbitrary and irrational, Mr Chaturvedi said that the

documents obtained under RTI Act, prima facie reveal certain serious irregularities, which needs to be investigated objectively by an appropriate agency.

SOME BABUS DO RETIRE BUT NOT FOR LONG

Retired senior babus rarely fade away into the sunset, they line up for other plum jobs in the government. In Himachal Pradesh, according to sources, several retired bureaucrats are among those who have applied for the post of chairman and member in the HP Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority. They include ex-IAS, IPS and IFS officers. These posts have fallen vacant following the completion of the tenure of K.K. Katoch as chairman and S.P. Katyal as member.

Further, now that the state government is setting up the state food commission, which will be notified soon, several retired bureaucrats are reportedly already lined up to get a posting here.

Similarly, many senior IAS and IPS officers, including retired chief secretaries and DGP-rank officers, have applied for the post of member in the Information Commission. Intense lobbying is reportedly underway, which underlines how the babu-neta nexus works in the country, whether at the Centre or in the states. Watch this space for updates.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian @Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,900.80	0.71
Nifty 50	11,470.25	0.73
S&P 500*	3,510.25	0.28
Dollar (₹)	72.87	1.00
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.88	0.05
Euro (₹)	87.30	0.22
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,963.418	0.82
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.91	0.63
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.943	-0.135
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.718	0.025

* As of 9:30 PM IST

ONGC profit dips 92% on oil, gas price slump

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

Infosys to hire 12K US workers in two years



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

Adani is world's largest solar asset owner

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

Honda launches new variants of City in India

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



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

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEP. 1

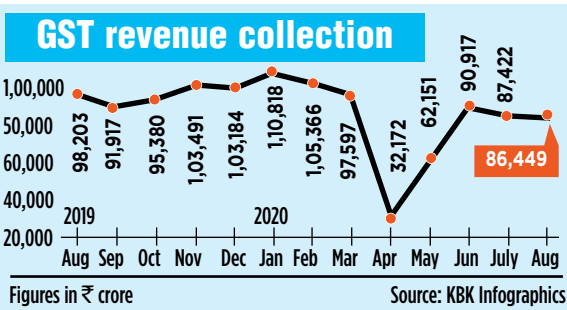
The industrial activity has rebounded in August as has been evident from the Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI). However, some of the other key indicators of industrial recovery, including diesel consumption, GST collections and e-way bills, were still moving sideways, indicating a possible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

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

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

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

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



MARKET HEAVES A SIGH OF RELIEF

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, SEPT.1

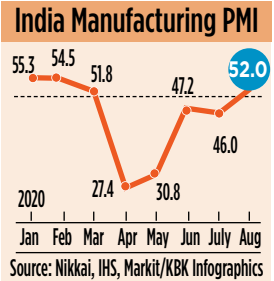
Market bounced back after sharp fall on Monday encouraged by positive auto sales number, softer AGR verdict for telecom companies, stable GST collection in August and five-month high manufacturing data.

The Sensex gained 272.51 points to close at 38,900 after rising 598 points intra-day. The Nifty-50 closed at 11,470

up 82.75 points.

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

FPIs were net buyers of equities worth Rs 486.09 crore.



malcy," he added.

The GST collections data for August also saw a recovery of 88 per cent of the year-ago period. In July, the collections were 86 per cent of the same month last year. The gross GST revenue collected in August 2020 is Rs 86,449 crore against Rs 98,202 crore in August 2019.

Of the gross GST revenue collected, CGST was Rs 15,906 crore, SGST Rs 21,064 crore, IGST was Rs 42,264 crore (including Rs 19,179 crore collected on import of goods) and cess was Rs 7,215 crore.

The GST mopup in August was marginally down from the previous month. "We do not have to read too much into the marginal decline sequentially, as domestic collections have attained 92 per cent YoY for operations in July is a sign of economic recovery post-lifting of lockdown," said Abhishek Jain, tax partner, EY.

"A significant part of the dip is attributable to imports, which has witnessed a decline," he added.

(With inputs from Madhusudan Sahoo)

Textile industry wants skewed dumping duty on VSF to go

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, SEP. 1

Anti-dumping duty on viscose staple fibre (VSF) has hurt the textile industry badly while it benefited monopoly players. The industry now wants the government to end the dumping duty, which is forcing textile units to import spun yarn. It is estimated that the powerloom sector lost the opportunity to utilise production capacity worth Rs 1,000 crore and provide 8,000 jobs in FY20 due to higher imports.

Viscose yarn producers and the downstream sectors are troubled by the discriminatory pricing of the dominant domestic staple fibre producer on the back of the anti-dumping duty on imported fibre. This has resulted in India's viscose-based man-made textile products lose their competitiveness in the overseas market.

For the past 10 years, VSF has been enjoying "undue protection" by way of anti-dumping duty. VSF attracts anti-dumping duty of \$0.103 to \$0.512 per kg of import. This has made the fibre costlier for the domestic yarn producers compared with international prices.

On the other hand,



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Robot to track bogus algo trades on cards in Korea

HEEJIN KIM SEOUL, SEP. 1

South Korean regulators are turning to artificial intelligence to help detect illegal use of algorithmic trading in financial markets.

The Korea Exchange has temporarily hired outside experts to develop a model to monitor algo trades, according to Lee Jong-pil, an official at the bourse. They are expected to complete studying the model by October, and the exchange will then test and decide whether to use it, he added.

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



by phone on Tuesday. "With algorithmic trading widely used in markets, unfair trades using algos are allegedly pervasive."

Authorities aim to stamp out specific trading patterns, such as market-making, spoofing or layering with the help of the model, according to state-

ment on KRX's website in April. Spoofing is a practice where traders enter orders they don't intend to execute to mislead others in the market as to the demand to buy or sell. One type of spoofing is called layering, where orders are stacked at various prices on one side of the market.

South Korea's stock exchange in July 2019 fined Bank of America Corp's brokerage arm 175 million won (\$148,000) for violating market rules. The US firm disrupted fair market orders through algorithmic trading, helping a hedge fund client earn 220 billion won of profit by repeatedly submitting and cancelling quotes for hundreds of

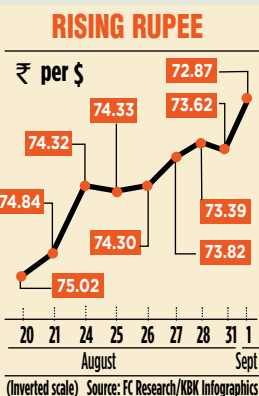
Rupee surges 75p, bonds prices up

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, SEP. 1

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Inventory stocking helps car numbers

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, SEP. 1

After six months of slowdown, the struggling Indian automobile manufacturers are seeing signs of a turnaround from the lockdown woes, with sales picture improving amidst positive signs of recovery.

Automobile wholesales from factory gates to showrooms rose in August as supply constraints caused by the pandemic eased and companies pushed stocks to dealers, anticipating an improvement in demand ahead of the festive season.

However, the long-term demand trends still remain in question.

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

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

Hyundai's performance along with Maruti Suzuki India hints towards a visible recovery trend in the market, which is coming on the back of pent-up demand, as well as the enhanced need for personal mobility post Covid-19 crisis.

Tata Motors, India's biggest automaker by revenues, sold 18,583 units last month, a rise of 154 per cent, up from 7,316 units it sold last year, reliable sources said. The firm reports only quarterly sales.

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

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

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

India's Gen Z risks getting left out of formal jobs: LSE

VRISHTI BENIWAL SEP. 1

India has been struggling with an unemployment problem and the coronavirus pandemic is making it even more difficult for its youngest workers to earn a decent living, shows an analysis by the London School of Economics.

Workers in cities in the age group of 18 to 25 years were already much less likely to be in formal jobs and more likely to be employed informally and paid less, wrote Shania Bhalotia, Swati Dhingra and Fjolla Kondrilli, the authors of the report 'City of dreams no more: The impact of Covid-19 on urban workers in India.'

"The youngest workers were much more likely to want a job guarantee, primarily for the livelihood security that they provide in these hard times," they wrote.

The government imposed one of the world's most restrictive lockdowns from March 25, leading to a loss of about 122 million jobs. The impact was felt more severely in urban centres where most workers didn't have a social security net, while businesses remained shut for weeks.



The result: India's economy posted its worst contraction last quarter - the biggest among major economies.

While India already runs the world's biggest jobs programme, under which workers can earn a guaranteed minimum daily wage for at least 100 days a year, the programme is limited to those living in the hinterland.

In urban areas, the survey shows that 31 per cent of individuals have a guaranteed number of days of work. But among those who do not, an overwhelming 70 per cent reported needing a guarantee of a minimum 100 days of work, according to the report by LSE's Centre for Economic Performance.

Central and state governments recognise the

livelihood crisis, but for the most part, their recovery packages fall far short of outlays to overcome it, the authors wrote.

"It may finally be time to revive old ideas, such as a universal job guarantee, to protect the livelihoods of many informal workers who are at risk of falling into urban poverty," said Dhingra. "Their aspirations of a prosperous life have already been shattered by the pandemic."

Some of the findings of the survey are: About 52 per cent of urban workers in India didn't have work and income for at least a month during the lockdown; and financial assistance from the government or employers was available to just a quarter of the workforce.

— Bloomberg

Small is new big for hotels in Covid times: Oyo chief

AXEL THRELFALL & JOSHUA FRANKLIN LONDON/NEW YORK, SEP. 1

The Covid-19 pandemic will mean holiday-goers will shy away from larger hotels for the foreseeable future in favour of boutiques and home rentals, the CEO of India-based hospitality startup Oyo Hotels and Homes said.

"The comments by Ritesh Agarwal underscore the anticipation within the hospitality industry that the coronavirus outbreak will fundamentally change the nature of travel.

"The hospitality industry will never be the same again, that is absolutely

clear," Agarwal said. "Small hotels are going to be in vogue. In my view, small is going to be the new big, wherein people will rethink a lot about going back to that 1,000-room hotel versus going to a 40-room niche hotel."

Oyo has seen some green shoots of recovery. "The last four, five months the company has seen some incremental recovery, especially in geographies such as Europe and the United States," Agarwal said.

In the US, where Oyo customers are primarily truckers, medical reps and essential workers, its revenue has nearly bounced back.

— Reuters

SHORT TAKES

Barca brace for season sans Messi

Madrid: With or without Lionel Messi, Barcelona already knows it will start its season at home against Villarreal at the end of September.

The Spanish league announced its calendar on Monday, and the first round is scheduled for the second weekend of September. But Barcelona and other teams who played later into this past season will have some of their games postponed so they have time to prepare. All matches will continue to be played in empty stadiums. The league hoped at least some fans would be allowed into matches, but Spain has been struggling to contain a new surge of Coronavirus cases.

Messi, who last week told Barcelona he wants to leave, skipped the team's first day of training on Monday. — AP

Barca's Rakitic now with Sevilla

Seville: Spanish club Sevilla reached a deal for the return of midfielder Ivan Rakitic on Tuesday. The club said Rakitic arrives from Barcelona on a contract until 2024.

The 32-year-old Croatian was one of the players that incoming Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman said was not in his plans for the future.

Rakitic had played three years with Sevilla before joining Barcelona in 2014, where he had played in nearly 200 matches. He left for Barcelona shortly after helping Sevilla win the 2014 Europa League title.

Rakitic has more than 100 appearances with Croatia, helping the team reach the 2018 World Cup final. He was a regular starter with Barcelona during most of his time with the club, but he hadn't been playing as often since coach Quique Setin took over in January. — AP

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DJOKER ON A ROLL

Novak, Zverev into second round of US Open

New York, Sept. 1: Pre-tournament favorite Novak Djokovic marched into round two of the US Open Monday as he launched his bid for a 18th Grand Slam with a straight-sets win.

The World No.1 dispatched unheralded Damir Dzumhur of Bosnia-Herzegovina 6-1, 6-4, 6-1 under floodlights at an empty Arthur Ashe Stadium in New York.

The Serbian superstar took just 23 minutes to win the first set before laboring to a narrow victory in an hour-long second set.

With Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer absent, Djokovic is looking to close the gap on them in the race for the all-time men's singles Grand Slam record.

Djokovic currently has 17, behind Nadal on 19 and Federer on 20.

Earlier, fifth seed Alexander Zverev was made to work hard as he progressed into round two of the US Open Monday following a three-hour-long tussle with 2017 finalist Kevan Anderson.

The German, seeking his first Grand Slam title, took the first set on a tie-break 7-6 (7/2) before losing the second 7-5 in an eerily empty Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Ultimately, the 23-year-old proved too much for the South African veteran, winning the third set 6-3 and the fourth 7-5.

Afterwards he shared a moment on a big screen with his tennis-playing brother Mischa Zverev who was beamed into the stadium from his sofa at home.

"I am actually quite happy with a first round like that," said Zverev, who reached his first Grand Slam semifinal at the Australian Open earlier this year. — AFP



Naomi Osaka of Japan wears a mask in honour of Breonna Taylor as she celebrates after defeating Misaki Doi of Japan during the first round of the US Open tennis championships in New York on Monday. — AP

Osaka honours racial victims

New York, Sept. 1: Naomi Osaka arrived on court for her opening US Open game on Monday wearing a face mask bearing the name of Breonna Taylor, the African-American nurse shot dead by police who raided her apartment in Kentucky in March. By the time the US Open fortnight is over, Osaka says she hopes to have honoured the memory of six other victims of racial injustice.

"For me, I just want to spread awareness," Osaka said after her 6-2, 5-7, 6-2 win over Japanese compatriot Misaki Doi.

"I'm aware that tennis is watched all over the world, and maybe there is someone that doesn't know Breonna Taylor's story. Maybe they'll Google it or something. For me, just spreading awareness. I feel like the more people know the story, then the more inter-

esting or interested they'll become in it," the fourth seed added.

Osaka, of Haitian and Japanese heritage, said she has six other masks bearing the names of black people killed by police that she hoped to wear through the Grand Slam. "I have seven and it's quite sad that seven is not enough for the amount of names," she said.

The 22-year-old has spoken out repeatedly in the

wake of the protests that swept USA following the death of George Floyd during a confrontation with police in May.

Osaka said she is increasingly comfortable in her role as athlete activist. "A lot of people ask me if I feel more stressed out ever since I started speaking out more. To be honest, not really. At this point, if you don't like me, it is what it is," she said. — AFP

CSK to start training soon

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, SEPT. 1

After a series of setbacks, Chennai Super Kings on Tuesday moved a step closer to kicking off their IPL preparations. While the 13 Coronavirus-infected members who are staying in a separate hotel in isolation will be tested only after the mandatory 14-day quarantine period, the rest of the team cleared another test on Tuesday.

Chennai Super Kings CEO K. S. Viswanathan said there will be one more test on Thursday.

While their rivals have already begun their preparations, CSK are in an extended room quarantine. Viswanathan said the support staff, led by coach Stephen Fleming and his deputy Michael Hussey, are engaging players in online sessions.

"Apart from that, our trainer and physio are giving instructions over Zoom calls on how to train indoors," said Viswanathan.

Viswanathan said Super Kings will definitely play warm-up games if the

organisers can arrange them. "I think all the teams want to play some warm-up games," he added.

The CSK team management hasn't decided if they need a replacement for Suresh Raina, who has returned to India.

BHAJI'S ARRIVAL DELAYED

Veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh who was expected to join the CSK camp on Tuesday has delayed his arrival. While speculation is rife that Harbhajan is in a dilemma over going to Dubai, Viswanathan said the bowler hadn't said no yet.

"He said he would let us know (arrival date) by tomorrow. We are expecting him by the end of this week," he said.

I WILL BE IN ACTION SOON: CHAHAR

Deepak Chahar, who is in quarantine after testing positive, said on Tuesday that he was recovering. "Hopefully, I will be back in action soon. I am better now and trying my best to keep myself fit," said Chahar in a video.

HEARTBROKEN RAINA ASKS FOR SUPPORT

Chennai, Sept. 1: In an effort to put to rest intense speculations over his surprise IPL pullout, Suresh Raina on Tuesday took to *Twitter* to say he was grieving his relatives who were murdered in a mid-night robbery. "What happened to my family is Punjab was beyond horrible. My uncle was slaughtered to death, my bua & both my cousins had severe injuries. Unfortunately, my cousin also passed away last night after battling for life for days. My bua is still very very critical and is on life support (sic)," Raina tweeted.

Raina also requested the Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh for help. "Till date, we don't know what exactly had happened that night & who did this. I request @PunjabPoliceInd to look into this matter... Those criminals should not be spared to commit more crimes," @capt_amarinder @CMOPb (sic)," Raina said in another tweet.

MARUTI SUZUKI

Planning to buy a diesel car?
**4 out of 5 people save more*
with a petrol car instead.**

CALCULATE KIYA KYA?

With lower price of petrol cars and with fuel prices of petrol and diesel being almost the same, buying a petrol car will help you save more in the long run. Calculate and confirm it for yourself at www.marutisuzuki.com/calculate-kiya-kya.

Benefits of Maruti Suzuki Petrol Cars: _____



Best-in-class
fuel efficiency



Superior
driving performance



Enhanced
reliability



Calculate it yourself
by scanning this QR code.

Images are for illustration purposes only. Black glass of the vehicle is due to lighting effect. *Calculation methodology developed by Maruti Suzuki India Limited basis Dzire model. Claims and Calculation methodology validated by Kantar (world's leading data, insights and consulting company) and is for reference purpose only.