


# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
VISAKHAPATNAM | SATURDAY | 15 AUGUST 2020



## WEATHER

 **Max:** 29.0°C  
**Min:** 24.2°C  
**RH:** 95%  
**Rainfall:** 0.7 mm  
**Forecast:** Rain.  
Max/Min temp.  
29/24°C

## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+66,849)	(+1,011)
25,25,144	49,134
<i>covid19india.org</i>	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,921)	(+9)
TS: 88,396	674
(+ 8,943)	(+97)
AP: 2,73,085	2,475

## CASES AROUND THE WORLD

 **2,12,06,883**  
**DEATHS**  
**7,59,824**  
 **213**  
*worldometers.info/ coronavirus*

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Shravana Bahula Ekadasi till 2.14 pm  
**Star:** Mrigashira till 6.34 am  
**Varjyam:** 3.07 pm to 4.45 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 6.02 am to 7.43 am  
**Rahukalam:** 9 am to 10.30 am  
**HJRI CALENDAR**  
**Zulhijja** 24,1441 AH  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.50 am  
**Zohar:** 1.30 pm  
**Asar:** 4.45 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.15 pm  
**Isha:** 8.15 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.23 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.39 AM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 01.43 AM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 3.16 PM**

## COUNTER POINT



Are you sure he is our minister?

## IN BRIEF

### India can give fitting reply: Prez

**New Delhi:** President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday said while India believes in peace it is also capable of giving a befitting response to any attempt of aggression as shown by its troops in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh after “some in our neighbourhood”, a veiled reference to China, tried to carry out their “misadventure of expansion”. In his address to the nation on the eve of the 74th Independence Day, he spoke about the ‘Aatmanirbhar’ initiative and allayed fears of foreign investors saying India’s self-reliance means being self-sufficient without alienating or creating distance from the world.

## HC EXTENDS STAY ORDER ON THREE CAPITALS G.O.

**MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 14**

The AP High Court extended the status quo order on the three capitals and APCRDA repeal bills to August 27. The court had earlier issued status quo till August 14 on the two bills and heard the petitions on Friday.

The government sought lifting of the status quo orders but the HC, rejecting the plea, extended it to August 27 and postponed the next hearing on the same day.

The 65 petitioners, in which a majority is Amaravati farmers, while welcoming the extension expressed hope about getting justice eventually.

■ **Page 2: Master plan can’t be basis, says state**

## INDIA, CHINA FOUGHT IN MAY, JUNE, SAYS ITBP

**PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 14**

Indian and Chinese troops clashed brutally at multiple times in May and June at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh, a fact that emerged on Friday after the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) recommended 21 names of its men for gallantry medals. They faced the Chinese during face offs and skirmishes in May-June 2020, some of which lasted for 17-20 hours.

ITBP D-G S.S. Deswal said the force has recommended 21 Gallantry medals and 294 DG Gallantry Commendations for ITBP personnel.

## NATION | 4

### Ashok Gehlot wins trust vote in Rajasthan



## WORLD | 5

### Don stokes false birther theory about Harris



## SPORTS | 6

### Tata Group expresses interest to sponsor IPL



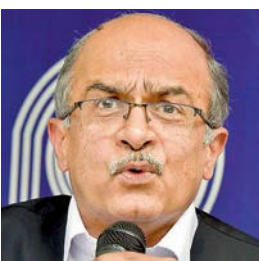
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# Bhushan guilty of contempt: SC

## ‘Unfair’ criticism of judiciary must be dealt with firmly, says top court; Sentence Aug. 20

**PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, AUG. 14**



Prashant Bhushan

The Supreme Court on Friday held activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan guilty of “criminal contempt” for lowering its dignity and authority by questioning, via his tweets, the functioning of the top court in the last six years under the present Chief Justice, Sharad A. Bobde, and his predecessors. The court fixed August 20 for his sentencing.

Holding that the tweet in question was “malicious” and based on “distorted facts”, a bench comprising Justice Arun Mishra, Justice B.R. Gavai and Justice Krishna Murari said that the tweet had the “effect of destabilising the very foundation” of the judiciary. The country’s top court has taken exception of that part of Mr Bhushan’s June 27 tweet in which he said that the SC has played a substantial role in allowing the destruction of democra-

cy in the past six years, since 2014, and questioned the role of the last four Chief Justices in particular in allowing it.

The court said that in its “considered view” the tweet “undermines the dignity and authority of the institution of the Supreme Court and the CJI and directly affronts the majesty of law.” “There is no matter of doubt that the tweet tends to shake the public confidence in the institution of judiciary,” it said. The “scurrilous/malicious attacks” by Mr Bhushan are not only “against one or two judges but the entire Supreme Court in its

functioning of the last six years.” The court said that the “scurrilous allegations, which are malicious in nature and have the tendency to scandalise the court are not expected from a person, who is a lawyer of 30 years standing.” Saying that the tweet is not “fair criticism of the functioning of the judiciary, made bona fide in the public interest,” the court said while rejecting Mr Bhushan’s contention that his criticism was bona fide and in public interest. Justifying its firm stand in holding Mr Bhushan guilty, the court said that an attack on the SC does not only tend to erode the confidence of an ordinary litigant in it, but similarly tends to impact the confidence of judges across the country in the SC. The court let off Twitter, accepting its explanation that it was an intermediary.

■ **More reports on Pg 4**

## CM reiterates resolve to help farmers with Rythu Bharosa

**DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 14**

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has reiterated that his government is committed to helping farmers through Rythu Bharosa Kendras

(RBKs). He asserted that while RBKs will address all issues of farmers, warehouses and cold storage units will be built keeping in view the future needs of farmers.

During a review meeting, he said warehouses

and Individual Quick Freezers should be developed keeping in view the future demands of farmers. “Food processing should begin from village level and every mandal should have a cold storage unit.”

## India tally 25 L+, Shah -ve, Kerala ministers isolated

**DC CORRESPONDENTS with agency inputs THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NEW DELHI, AUG. 14**

India’s Covid-19 tally crossed the 25 lakh mark on Friday, taking just eight days to add five lakh cases. A total of 66,849 new cases were registered, taking the total to 25,25,114, of whom about 18 lakh have recovered.

The toll stands at 49,134 with 990 deaths added during the day.

Union home minister Amit Shah, who was undergoing treatment for Coronavirus at a private hospital in Haryana, said he has tested negative. Shah, 55, will be in home isolation for a few days. He had tested positive on August 2.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and three ministers, K.K.

Shailaja, A.C. Moideen and V.S. Sunil Kumar, on Friday tested negative for the Coronavirus, hours after quarantining themselves as they came in the primary contact list of the Mamallapuram collector who has contracted the virus.

Three other ministers, Assembly Speaker P. Sreeramakrishnan, Chief Secretary Dr Vishwas Mehta and DGP Loknath Behera also went into self-quarantine.

Collector E. Gopalakrishnan had interacted with the Chief Minister at the Kozhikode airport a day after the Air India Express aircraft crash on August 7. Malappuram district SP U. Abdul Kareem, the assistant collector and 20 employees of the collectorate had tested positive for Covid-19.

## SPB IMPROVES AFTER BULLETIN SCARES FANS

**BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 14**

After a medical bulletin on the health of singer S.P. Balasubrahmanyam issued by a hospital in Chennai where he was being treated for Covid-19 said he was in a critical condition caused concern among his fans and followers, his family on Friday evening announced that he was in much better shape than he was earlier in the day. His son S.P. Charan said the singer was seriously unwell but had recovered.

■ **Full report on Page 3**

## SWARNA | TRAP

### Victims died of asphyxia in smoke filled rooms

## Rooms locked, patients couldn’t flee

**SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 14**

Family members of some of the victims of the fire mishap at Swarna Palace Hotel, which housed the Covid care centre of Ramesh Hospitals, have alleged that doors of rooms in which their relatives were being treated were locked from outside to prevent them from moving out and spreading the infection. This prevented them from

escaping, and most of them died of asphyxia in their own rooms. Ten persons died in the pre-dawn fire at the hotel on August 9.

Majji Ashok, the youngest son of Majji Gopi, who died in the fire, said, “My father died due to inhaling noxious gas in his room. We could not make out any burns on his body. My father became very sensitive after testing positive for Covid-19. Thus, we admitted him to Ramesh Hospitals hoping for best treat-

ment and recovery. But we have lost him forever.”

Narasimha Swamy lost his elder sister G. Venkata Jayalakshmi, who was in Room 208 and nephew Pawan, who was in Room 203, residents of Kandukur, to the fire mishap.

He alleged, “Fire personnel were alerted 30-40 minutes late after the fire erupted on the ground floor. I thought that my nephew, being a youngster, might have escaped. But he too was found dead in his

room. Fire personnel saved patients from the third floor as patients managed to step out of their windows. They never bothered to break into all rooms to look for survivors.”

One of the deceased was retired SI Sunkara Babu Rao. His son-in-law Amaresh said, “I recollect doctors telling us that doors of rooms in the hotel will be locked from outside, so that Coronavirus patients do not go out and infect others.”




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## IN BRIEF

## AP Cabinet meeting on August 19

**Vijayawada:** The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet meeting will be held on August 19 at 11 am in Secretariat first block at Velagapudi. Chief Secretary to the AP government, Neelam Sawhney, issued a circular to all government departments informing them about the Cabinet meeting and directed them to prepare required reports and information. The Cabinet meeting will be headed by Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, and important issues will be discussed in the meeting. Recently, Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy conducted a meeting of AMRDA and decided to develop Amaravati as legislative capital.

## GOVT HAS NO RIGHT TO SELL AMARAVATI LANDS, SAYS NAIDU

**MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG 14**

Telugu Desam chief, N Chandrababu Naidu, on Friday strongly objected to the continuing 'misinformation campaign' by the ruling Jagan government that the previous TD regime had not brought any development but only showed 'graphics' to the people on Amaravati as capital.

Expressing anguish at the reports about the plans of YSR Congress government to sell Amaravati buildings and lands, Naidu claimed the government had no right to sell Amaravati lands.

Asserting that over ₹41,675 crore-worth projects were grounded for developing the government and public infrastructure in Amaravati and 45 to 80 per cent work was completed on different buildings already, Naidu alleged that Jagan and his ministers were making false claims on 'graphics' only to destroy the high potential, dream capital of Andhra Pradesh out of political vendetta.

Refuting the allegation that TD made the capital selection unilaterally, Naidu claimed that the decision was taken based on many strong parameters, including the fact that more than 50 per cent people told the Sivaramakrishnan committee that they would favour the location of capital in Amaravati region between Vijayawada and Guntur. He explained that over 4,700 people expressed this opinion, while only 507 people preferred Visakhapatnam, 360 persons Kurnool and 265 people chose Ongole.

Appealing to the people to think whether Amaravati as capital was a saner decision or not going by how Amaravati was located equidistant to the farthest tips of the state, Naidu stated that about 2.3 crore out of the total 5.5 crore people are living on one side of Amaravati while another 2.15 crore were living on the other side and, similarly, 12 MPs are from one side of Amaravati and another 12 from the opposite side. He mentioned that about 84 MLAs are on one side and 74 MLAs are on the other.

Stating that a dream capital was the need of the hour, Naidu said that if he had built a small town for AP's capital nearby Vijayawada or in Guntur city, there would not have been any scope for future growth on the lines of metropolitan cities in other progressive states.

Jagan was not realising the need for bringing in development in a systematic way, said an exasperated Naidu.

● Chandrababu Naidu alleged that Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and his ministers were making false claims on 'graphics' only to destroy the high potential, dream capital of Andhra Pradesh out of political vendetta.



Secretariat premises is illuminated on the occasion of 74th Independence Day celebrations at Velagapudi on Friday. — C. NARAYANA RAO

## UK, Vizag AMTZ to jointly fight Covid

Indian med-tech start-ups invited to apply by Aug. 31

**K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 14**

UK government and Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone (AMTZ) signed a MoU for manufacture and supply of ventilators and other essential medical equipment to fight Covid-19 under a ₹5.6 million deal. Both the parties have invited innovative Indian med-tech start-ups to apply by August 31 to be a part of the new manufacturing support programme.

Select start-ups will be hosted at AMTZ's MediValley incubation centre, receiving financial, technical and infrastructure support necessary to make their equipment market-ready. The programme is part of a

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed recently between the UK Government and AMTZ. The MoU aims to boost med-tech collaboration between the two countries by creating direct research and development linkages between UK companies and AMTZ's manufacturing and testing facilities, and to the wider Indian healthcare market.

Dr Andrew Fleming, British Deputy High Commissioner to AP and TS said the fight against the pandemic required a global response.

New partnerships born in these times of adversity have a chance to make a difference and the potential to grow into something even bigger, Dr

Andrew Fleming said.

Dr Jitendar Sharma, Managing Director and CEO, AMTZ said the Zone was happy to sign a memorandum of understanding with the British High Commission for encouraging innovations in medical devices, particularly on those products that are necessary for fight against Covid.

Through this partnership, British High Commission and AMTZ aim to encourage a number of innovators and provide them with technical, technological, financial, entrepreneurial and strategic hand-holding enabling them to leapfrog from idea to innovation and from a start-up to an established enterprise.

## Covid-19 care permit to Ramesh Hosp cancelled

**SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 14**

The five-member probe panel led by joint collector (Development) L. Siva Sankar has found fault with management of Ramesh Hospitals, which had hired Swarna Palace as a Covid Care Centre. A major fire mishap at the hotel-turned-hospital last Sunday had caused the death of 10 Coronavirus patients, who were among those undergoing treatment at Swarna Palace. The inquiry team found that Ramesh Hospitals had flouted government norms in admitting patients for providing treatment at the hospital and its hired premises.

A fallout of the report is Vijayawada district collector A. Md. Imtiaz cancelling the permission granted to Ramesh Hospitals for treating Covid-19 patients under Category-A. The hospital authorities have been directed not to admit any Covid-19 patients hereafter until further orders. The probe panel submitted its preliminary report to the collector here on Friday. It made several key observations, including the hospital charging patients in excess of government-recommended rates in providing treatment to Covid-19 patients.

Based on the report, the district medical and health officer has served a notice to Dr Ramesh Cardiac and Super Speciality Private Limited, Vijayawada, pointing out that it violated Rule (9) of AP Allopathic Private Medical Care Establish-

## Ramesh hospitals staffers move city court for bail

**DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 14**

The bail petition of the three accused Ramesh hospitals staffers in the Swarna Palace hotel fire mishap case was heard in a local court in the city and the next hearing is scheduled to be held on Monday.

Earlier, police arrested them from the Ramesh hospitals after registering a case following death of 10 patients in a fire at the Covid-19 care centre at the Swarna Palace hotel being managed by Ramesh Hospitals after finding lapses in patient safety.

Sent to judicial remand for 14 days at the sub jail in Machilipatnam, they moved the local court in the city for bail. Meanwhile, police filed a petition in the court seeking police custody of them.

ments Registration and Regulation Rules by collecting exorbitant rates and non-display of rates charged for each type of service provided by the hospital.

The notice underlined that G. O. MS No. 77 dated 08/07/2020 had been violated by collecting exorbitant fees for every admission. It pointed to also admitting Covid-19 patients in Metropolitan Hotel and M5 Hotel without obtaining permission from district authorities. It directed the hospital management to be present before

Ramesh Hospitals' managing director also moved an anticipatory bail petition in the city court and the next hearing is scheduled to be held on Monday.

In a related development, police interrogated former MP, Rayapati Sambasiva Rao's, daughter-in-law, Dr. Mamatha, who works in Ramesh Hospitals in Guntur, for six hours.

Asserting that she was working in Ramesh hospitals in Guntur and looks after operations there, Dr. Mamatha that she did not have any role in Ramesh hospitals, Vijayawada. Her advocate, Gangiseti Uma Shankar, was critical of the police for subjecting her to six hours of interrogation when she herself was convalescing from a Covid-19 infection.

the DMHO Camp Office at Old GGH Campus on August 30 to answer in writing to the charges.

The probe panel ordered the Swarna Palace hotel management to transmit its answer to the charges before the appointed day of hearing of the case. It allowed the hotel management to be represented by an authorised person or legal practitioner. Further, the notice directed the hospital authorities to surrender their certificate of registration to DMHO on or before the date of hearing.

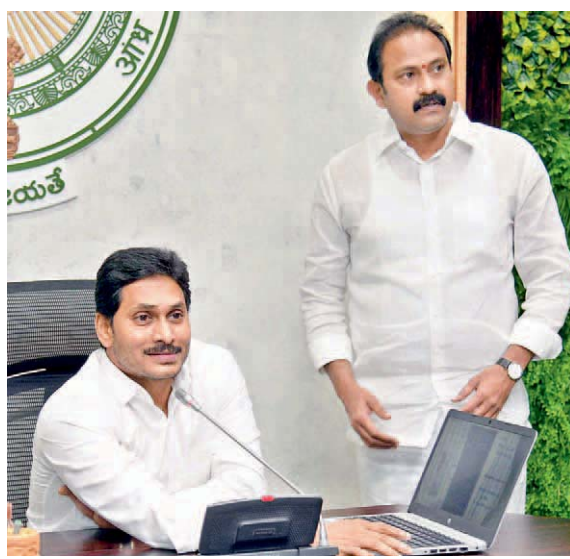
## CM inaugurates private hospital at Nandyal town

**D. SIVA RAMI REDDY | DC KURNOOL, AUG. 14**

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy inaugurated Udayananda private hospital at Nandyal town on Friday.

The CM inaugurated the facility through a video link from his camp office at Tadepalli, said finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy. The new health facility will serve the health needs of local people with ultra-modern infrastructure, he added.

Nandyal MP Pocha B-ramananda Reddy, collector G. Veera Pandian, SP K. Fakkeerappa, MLAs Silpa Chakrapani Reddy, Silpa Ravichandra Kishor Reddy, Katasani Rambhupal Reddy and others participated.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy virtual inauguration of Udayananda Hospitals at Nandyal town from the camp office on Friday.

## DEVINENI DEMANDS RESIGNATION OF FINANCE MINISTER

**DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 14**

Former minister and Telugu Desam (TD) senior leader Devineni Umamaheswara Rao on Friday alleged that the YSR Congress government was systematically destroying the comprehensive financial management system brought in by the previous TD regime for transparency and accountability in state financial management.

Mr Devineni Umamaheswara Rao demanded the resignation of finance minister Mr Buggana Rajendranath Reddy, asking him to take the responsibility for the ₹649 crore double payments made to contractors and several others.

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## POLICE ARE NOW PEOPLE-FRIENDLY, SAYS DGP SAWANG

**DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 14**

DGP Gowtham Sawang said that the police department is turning people-friendly with innovative measures implemented under a new policing concept. He was speaking after inaugurating a two-day training programme on 'Transformational policing: Putting people first' at Guntur on Friday.

He said that transformational policing is intended to bring about comprehensive changes in the vision.

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## INDIAN NAVY

### SALUTES WINNERS OF GALLANTRY AWARDS ON THE OCCASION OF INDEPENDENCE DAY 2020

NAO SENA MEDAL (GALLANTRY)	
CAPT MRIGANK SHEOKAND	05107 - F
CDR DHANUSH MENON	05556 - A
HARIDAS KUNDU, CHA (FD)	130956 - B
NAVEEN KUMAR, LS (UW)	230889 - Z

### INDIAN NAVY – COMBAT READY, CREDIBLE AND COHESIVE

dawp 10702/13/0030/2021

## Master plan can't be basis, says state

From Page 1

The full bench, comprising Chief Justice J.K. Maheswari, Justice A.V. Seshasai and Justice M. Satyanarayana Murthy, directed the state government to maintain the status quo till August 27 on the decentralisation and CRDA Repeal Bill. The three judges bench heard about 65 petitions filed challenging the government's gazette notification repealing the decentralisation Act and CRDA Act.

Earlier, filing the affidavit on behalf of the State government, senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi appealed to the bench to lift the status quo and give relaxation to

the government to continue its administrative works. The state government contended that there cannot be any legitimate expectations on the basis of a master plan, which could be modified at any time.

In any event, even if there was any legitimate expectation, it has to make way for protection of public interest. It also stated that the state's economic capacity is a relevant criterion for continuance of an earlier decision in public interest and bona fide rational grounds, prevalent in the present instance.

Referring to the contention of the promissory estoppel, as the decision was not taken arbitrarily but on the

basis of various studies that were carried by various expert bodies.

The counsel for the state government pointed out that the subject matter of the legislation is within the competence of the State legislation. It was pointed out that all the contentions, including Section 5 of AP Reorganisation Act, are untenable.

Several advocates representing the majority petitioners appealed to the court to hear arguments in person in the open court instead of through video conference. They said they are facing a number of audio technical problems online.

Dwivedi said it was not possible to appear in person

due to the travel restrictions in the wake of the Covid pandemic. He is presenting the arguments from Delhi.

Meanwhile, AP Congress Committee coordination committee member and Amaravati Women JAC leader Sunkara Padmasri welcomed the extension of status quo. She said that the fight of Amaravati farmers was legitimate and claimed that YSRC government cannot shift the Capital from Amaravati due to constitutional rights of farmers. She asked Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to resolve Amaravati issue by inviting local farmers for talks in order to arrive at an amicable win-win understanding.



## IN BRIEF

## MP writes to Modi on nitrate

**Vijayawada:** Narasaraopeta YSRC MP, Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu, wrote a letter to Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, to take measures for the safety of people by shifting ammonium nitrate stocks to safer places from Visakhapatnam and Chennai. He wrote that the people of Visakhapatnam in particular, and the people of Andhra Pradesh in general, are really worried because one can find storage of huge stocks of ammonium nitrate in Visakhapatnam at any given point of time. The city has oil tanks of HPLC, the Indian naval establishment, arms depots, a naval airbase, sea base and Visakhapatnam is one of the most populous cities of Andhra Pradesh, wrote Devarayalu.

## Heavy rains to hit coastal AP

**Visakhapatnam:** With the formation of a low-pressure area over north-west Bay of Bengal, heavy to moderate rains have been predicted for the next 48 hours in the coastal districts. There have been rains in the north Coastal region for over 12 hours. According to reports, heavy rains are likely in several areas, particularly north coastal and Godavari districts. The condition of the sea will be rough to very rough and strong winds are predicted from westerly during the next 48 hours. The low pressure is expected to be well-marked on Saturday.

## Endowments lands for lease

**Vijayawada:** In order to bring commercial lands in urban areas in the state that have been lying idle into use, the department of endowments, AP, has decided to lease them out in a transparent manner.

## State registers 8,943 Covid cases, 97 deaths, toll 2,475

East Godavari continues to lead with 1,146, followed by 987 in Chittoor

**SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 14**

Offering some relief to the state health authorities, AP has registered a slight dip in coronavirus infections with 8,943 new cases taking the total number to 2,73,085 and 97 deaths taking the death toll to 2,475 in the last 24 hours, after days of almost 10k cases.

The state health authorities issued the Covid-19 bulletin here on Friday stating that out of 53,026 samples tested, 8,943 individuals have tested positive.

Out of a total of 27,58,485 samples tested so far in the state, 1,80,703 infected patients have been discharged after recovery, while 89,907

infected patients are still undergoing treatment at various hospitals in the state.

Among the new confirmed infections, East Godavari continues to lead with 1,146, followed by 987 in Chittoor; 956 in Kurnool, 885 in Visakhapatnam, 762 in Anantapur, 748 in West Godavari, 669 in Nellore, 548 in Vizianagaram, 547 in Srikakulam, 530 in Kadapa, 527 in Guntur, 338 in Krishna and 300 in Prakasam.

With regard to cumulative Covid-19 positive cases, East Godavari is the highest with 38,292, followed by 32,012 in Kurnool, 28,096 in Anantapur, 24,940 in Guntur, 23,402 in Visakhapatnam, 22,077 in West Godavari, 21,519 in

Chittoor, 16,169 in Nellore, 16,133 in Kadapa, 13,320 in Srikakulam, 11,783 in Krishna, 11,684 in Vizianagaram, 10,763 in Prakasam, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

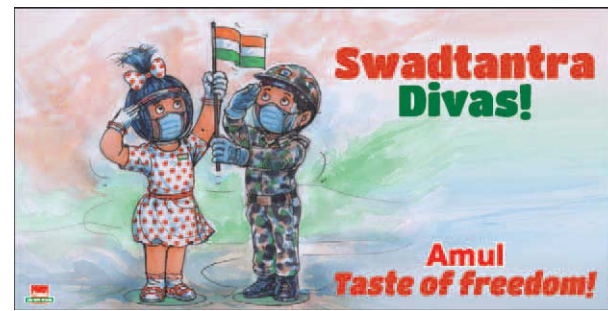
The state continues to witness deaths of Covid-19 infected patients in the last few days. 12 patients died in Kurnool, 10 each in Chittoor, East Godavari, Guntur, West Godavari and Nellore, six each in Kadapa, Prakasam, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam, three in Vizianagaram and two in Krishna.

Among the deceased, Kurnool is highest with 276, followed by 275 in Guntur, 258 in East Godavari, 220 in Krishna, 215 in Chittoor, 209 in Anantapur, 193 in Visakhapatnam, 180 in West Godavari, 156 in Srikakulam, 152 in Prakasam, 131 in Nellore, 106 in Vizianagaram and 104 in Kadapa.

The state health authorities have discharged 9,779 infected patients after recovery from various hospitals in the last 24 hours in the state. AP has carried out Covid-19 tests on 51,657 samples per million population and registered a Covid-19 positive rate at 9.90 while Maharashtra still leads with 23,868 tests and a rate of 18.79. Telangana conducted 17,536 tests and recorded a rate at 12.55.

Earlier, the EAMCET was scheduled to be held from July 27 to 31 but due to the pandemic, it was cancelled. Minister for education, Audimulapu Suresh, released the new schedule

for EAMCET, APECE, APICET, APEdCET, APLWCET, APPECET and APPGECET. Pointing out that the AP state council of higher education has finalised the revised schedule for conducting the AP Common Entrance Tests 2020, Suresh said that the EAMCET exam will be conducted from September 17 to 25. The AP-ICET exam will be conducted on September 10 and 11.



## APEAMCET TO BE HELD FROM SEPT. 17

**MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 14**

New schedules for AP common entrance tests announced on Friday under which EAMCET will be held from September 17 to 25 in Andhra Pradesh.

Earlier, the EAMCET was scheduled to be held from July 27 to 31 but due to the pandemic, it was cancelled. Minister for education, Audimulapu Suresh, released the new schedule

## MOTHER HELD FOR THROWING NEWBORN INTO BUSHES

**DC CORRESPONDENT VIZIANAGARAM, AUG. 14**

The police on Friday arrested a 20-year-old student for abandoning her newborn baby boy by throwing him into the bushes. They also have taken her mother into custody for assisting her in the ghastly act.

The woman hails from Rellivalasa village under the Pusapatirega police station limits in Vizianagaram district. She abandoned the boy soon after the birth on August 5.

The 20-year-old woman is a student who lived in Vizianagaram Town for a few months preparing for competitive examinations. She fell in love with her distant relative in Vizianagaram, and they both wanted to get married once they settled in life.

Since the woman stayed alone in Vizianagaram Town, a courtship between the two resulted in a pregnancy.

Later, the woman went to her village and disclosed the matter to her mother. The

mother kept her in a separate room in the house and told the neighbours that she was seriously preparing for examinations.

She delivered the baby late on August 4 evening. A few days after the delivery, the two went to the local farm pond and threw the baby into the bushes.

The baby boy was rescued by the locals hours later, and the police along with the officials of Integrated Child Development Services shifted the newborn boy to Gosha Hospital in Vizianagaram Town for better medical care.

The police said that when they carried out the investigation, the woman, along with her mother, surrendered before the police and confessed the crime on Friday.

The woman was charged under Sections 75 (punishment for cruelty to child) of the Juvenile Justice Act and 317 (Exposure and abandonment of child under twelve years by parents or person having care of it) of the Indian Penal Code.

## Balu's health condition improved, says his son

**BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 14**

After a medical bulletin on the health of legendary playback singer S.P. Balasubrahmanyam issued by a hospital in Chennai where he was being treated for Covid-19 said he was in a critical condition caused concern among his fans and followers, his family on Friday evening announced that he was in much better shape than he was earlier in the day.

Balasubrahmanyam's son S.P. Charan, and sister S.P. Vasantha said that the singer was seriously unwell earlier on Friday but had recovered. Charan told the media in Chennai that his father's condition had improved under the care of the doctors. There is no cause for concern

and he will get better, Charan said.

Vasantha said her brother's will power was strong and with the prayers of all his well-wishers and God's grace, he will recover soon and come back home safe and sound.

Earlier, news of the sudden deterioration of the health one of the India's greatest playback singers was announced in the afternoon by the hospital where the singer had admitted himself on August 5.

The hospital had said, "There has been a setback in the health of Thiru S.P. Balasubrahmanyam," and his condition had deteriorated on August 13 and he was moved to the ICU. The hospital had added that Balasubrahmanyam was "on life support" and that his condition was critical.



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SHORT TAKES

MUKHERJEE REMAINS CRITICAL, SAYS DAUGHTER

New Delhi, Aug. 14: The condition of former president Pranab Mukherjee remains critical but has not worsened, his daughter Sharmistha Mukherjee said on Friday.

Doctors attending on the 84-year-old former president at the hospital said his condition remained unchanged on Friday morning. Mukherjee was admitted to the Army's Research and Referral Hospital in Delhi cantonment on Monday and was operated for the removal of a clot in the brain.

He had also tested positive for Covid-19. "The condition of Pranab Mukherjee remains unchanged this morning (August 14, 2020). He is under intensive care and continues to be on ventilatory support. His vital parameters are presently stable," the hospital said in a statement.

The former President's daughter took to Twitter after the medical bulletin, saying his condition has not worsened. "Without getting into medical jargons, whatever I could understand from the last two days is that though my dad's condition continues to remain very critical, it hasn't worsened. There's little improvement in his eyes' reaction to light," she said.

Pranab Mukherjee served as the 13th President of India from 2012 to 2017.

U.P. LEGISLATOR ARRESTED IN MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, AUG. 14

MLA from Gyanpur in Uttar Pradesh Vijay Mishra who had earlier feared his encounter death at the hands of UP police, was on Friday arrested in Agar district of Madhya Pradesh. The lawmaker who was reportedly on his way to Rajasthan after paying a visit to Mahakal temple in Ujjain was arrested at Tanodia in Agar district, police said.

"Tip off by UP police led to the MLA's arrest", Indore range inspector general of police Rakesh Gupta said. A team of UP police reportedly reached Agar late in the night to take custody of the MLA, police sources said.

The lawmaker was scheduled to be produced in a local court in Bhadohi district in UP on Saturday, sources said. The MLA who was wanted by UP police in several cases including the one related to a property dispute in UP, had earlier circulated a video in social media accusing UP police of conspiring to kill him in encounter.

ELEPHANT KILLS FOREST RANGER IN MP

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, AUG 14

An elephant deployed in tiger tracking in Panna tiger reserve in Madhya Pradesh on Friday attacked the local forest ranger B.R. Bhagat, leading to his death.

The pachyderm which had been deployed in tiger tracking in Hinouti range of Panna tiger reserve for the past one week suddenly became aggressive and killed the forest officer with his tusks, official reports reaching here said.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan expressed shock and grief over the death of the forest officer. Territorial fight between the two tigers in the area last week had led to death of one and injury to the other.

The Panna tiger reserve authorities had launched an exercise to track the wounded tiger for its treatment.



A 4,000 sqft Tricolor rangoli made by students and teachers of a private engineering college in Bengaluru on Friday as part of the 74th Independence Day celebrations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver his seventh straight Independence Day speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Saturday - an address that comes amid the Coronavirus pandemic, a border standoff with China and a slew of reforms by the government under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

— PTI

# Shaurya Chakra for 3 Army officers for J&K operations

## Officers who fought Chinese troops may get gallantry awards on R-Day

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 14

Three Indian Army personnel — Lt Colonel Krishan Singh Rawat, Major Anil Urs and Havildar Alok Kumar Dubey — have been conferred with the prestigious Shaurya Chakra for counter terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

Indian Army personnel who have courageously fought Chinese troops in Eastern Ladakh, particularly in Galwan Valley are likely to be given gallantry awards during Republic Day in January.

They don't figure in the gallantry awards list for

Independence Day.

Wing Commander Vishak Nair, from the Indian Air Force, has also been conferred with the Shaurya Chakra on the eve of Independence Day. President Ram Nath Kovind has approved 84 awards and decorations to the Armed Forces personnel and members of the Paramilitary Forces.

The awards include one Kirti Chakra, nine Shaurya Chakras, five Bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry), 60 Sena Medals (Gallantry), four Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry) and five Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry). Major Anil, from

Maratha Light Infantry laid an ambush on receiving intelligence that terrorists were planning to infiltrate from across the line of control (LoC).

On spotting the group of terrorists Major Anil brought down effective fire killing three terrorists. Being in close proximity to LoC, his action drew violent fire from the Pakistan army.

However, Maj Anil chose to remain at the location awaiting an opportunity to engage the rest of the terrorists.

After a life threatening wait of 15 minutes, the team sighted and brought down fire on two more ter-

rorists leading to neutralisation of a total five terrorists in the ambush.

Lt Colonel Rawat, Sena Medal, from the elite Special Forces was team leader of a mission oriented team, deployed along the LoC in J&K for conduct of counter infiltration and counter terrorist operations.

On receiving inputs about infiltration attempts by terrorists, he led his team to a 36 hours search and kill ambush, in a tough terrain and under difficult weather conditions near LoC.

He and his team killed four terrorists during the operation.

Havildar Alok, from Rajput Regiment 44 battalion of the Rashtriya Rifles, was deployed as a stop in the inner cordon during an operation last year in June in a village in J&K.

He challenged a group of terrorists who were trying to break the cordon and killed one category A++ terrorist despite coming under indiscriminate fire from them.

He further prevented other terrorists from escaping and facilitated his team to tighten the cordon.

His courageous action led to elimination of all four terrorists.

## INDIA: PULLBACK PROCESS IS COMPLEX

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 14

India on Friday termed the process of disengagement between Indian and Chinese troops at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) as a "complex" one that requires "re-deployment of troops by each side towards their regular posts on their respective sides of the LAC" but added significantly that this can be "one only through mutually agreed reciprocal actions".

While reiterating its expectation that China would "sincerely work" with India towards the objective of complete disengagement and de-escalation, New Delhi — in a clear message to Beijing — also reaffirmed that "the state of the border and the future of our ties cannot be separated".

# Huge cache of arms, ammo found in Assam

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, AUG. 14

In what Assam police claimed its pursuit to make Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) area free from illegal arms, security forces on Friday, a day before the Independence day, recovered huge cache of arms and ammunitions from Udalguri district of Bodoland Territorial council.

Informing that the operation was conducted jointly by Udalguri and Guwahati police, security sources said that the cache of sophisticated weapons belonged to NDFB.

Guwahati Police Commissioner Munna Prashad Gupta, who is also the ADGP of the Special Branch of Assam Police, told reporters that based on source information, Guwahati police conducted a search operation

● **GUWAHATI POLICE** conducted a search operation along with Udalguri police at several places in Udalguri district and recovered the arms, ammunition and explosives.

● **NO ARRESTS** have been made so far in this connection and investigation is on.

along with Udalguri police at several places in Udalguri district and recovered the arms, ammunition and explosives on Thursday night.

The arms were recovered from multiple locations of Udalguri district where the police found them kept hidden underground.

However, no arrests have been made so far in this connection and investigation is on.

Earlier, police had also recovered a huge cache of

arms and ammunition in Kokrajhar, Baksa and Chirang district.

All these weapons belong to various faction of NDFB which recently surrendered in mass, security sources said, adding that NDFB factions were suspected to have not surrendered their entire inventory.

Meanwhile Assam is already on alert ahead of Independence Day. Several militant outfits of the region have given a call to boycott the Independence Day celebrations.

The Intelligence agencies have warned that these outfits may try to carry out subversive activities to make their presence felt.

The Army, Police and the paramilitary forces are intensifying their operations and carrying out frisking and checking at various parts of the state.

# Bhushan verdict unfortunate, say legal experts

New Delhi, Aug. 14: The Supreme Court's Friday verdict holding Prashant Bhushan guilty of contempt for his two derogatory tweets against the judiciary was termed as "unfortunate" by legal experts who said the activist-lawyer was only exercising his freedom of expression.

Senior advocates Vikas Singh and Arvind Datar said those tweets could have been inappropriate but does not attract the charge of contempt of court.

However, taking a different stand, senior advocate Ajit Sinha, said it was for the court to decide and there's no point making any comment on the verdict.

It was Supreme Court's domain, he said.

Singh, former President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), said what the apex court ruled was not right.

"I do not approve what he said. It may be inappropriate, but it was a part of his free speech. It was not right what the court held today," he said.

Singh's view was shared by Datar, who termed the verdict as unfortunate, and did not agree with the finding that what Bhushan had said amounted to contempt of court.

It is unfortunate what the apex court decided today. Whatever he said was his freedom of expression and I do not think it amounts to contempt to court, Datar said.

— PTI

# Yechury says verdict weakens democracy

New Delhi, Aug. 14: The Supreme Court judgement on Friday holding activist-lawyer Prashant Bhushan guilty of criminal contempt for his tweets has weakened India's Constitutional democracy, alleged CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury.

The SC held Bhushan guilty of criminal contempt for his two derogatory tweets against the judiciary saying they cannot be said to be a fair criticism of the functioning of the judiciary made in the public interest.

Holding that Bhushan attempted to scandalise the entire institution of the SC, the top court said, "If such an attack is not dealt with, with requisite degree of firmness, it may affect the national honour and prestige in the comity of nations."

"Whether one agrees with the precise formulation of Prashant Bhushan's tweets or not, the SC judgement convicting him of contempt is alarming."

ing. It brings into the ambit of contempt, bona-fide criticism of the role played by SC as a Constitutional authority," Yechury said.

"The judgement will prevent open and free discussion on the role of the Supreme Court in India's democracy. This weakens India's Constitutional democracy," he said in a series of tweets.

He also said that the judgement also brings within its scope, genuine criticism of its present day functioning and approach.

"Hitherto, such statements were protected speech under Article 19 (1)(a) under the Constitution and were not considered contemptuous," he said.

A bench of Justices Arun Mishra, B.R. Gavai and Krishna Murari said: "The tweets which are based on the distorted facts, in our considered view, amount to committing criminal contempt."

— PTI

# Gehlot govt wins confidence vote

Jaipur, Aug. 14: The Ashok Gehlot government won a confidence vote in the Rajasthan Assembly on Friday, ending for now the threat triggered by a rebellion within the Congress ranks in the state.

The motion of confidence moved by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shanti Dhariwal was passed by voice vote, an expected win after the return of the 19 dissident Congress MLAs led by Sachin Pilot to the party-fold. During the discussion, Pilot said he will fight for the Congress as its "strongest warrior".

Replying to the debate on the motion, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot criticised the BJP, accusing it again of trying to bring down his government. "I will not let the government topple at any cost even if you make all attempts," he said.

Gehlot said the crisis had come to an end in a beautiful manner and this had hurt the Bharatiya Janata Party.

What was done in Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Madhya Pradesh? Elected governments are being toppled and democracy is under danger," he said.

Without taking names, he alleged that a Union minister was involved in the conspiracy to topple his government, saying this had become clear after some audio clips surfaced. The indirect reference was to Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, who has earlier rejected the Congress allegation.

The BJP had earlier said it will move a no trust motion against the government, but called off the move after the Congress itself announced that it will seek a floor test.

Referring to his seat being changed - earlier he sat next to Gehlot as the deputy CM - Pilot said he is now placed at the 'border' between his party and the opposition in the House. "Who is sent to the border? The strongest warrior is sent," he said.

# Congress, BJP spar over Kamal Nath's I-Day speech

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, AUG. 14

The ruling BJP here on Friday took a jibe at former chief minister and Congress veteran Kamal Nath for addressing people on the eve of Independence Day, reminding him that August 14 is Pakistan's Independence Day.

The remark by BJP spokesman Hitesh Vajpayee has invited sharp reactions from the Congress which described

the observation as 'mischievous and unfortunate'.

Congress spokesman Narendra Singh Saluja cited the customary address to the nation on the eve of Independence Day by President of India and said he was surprised that the BJP leaders have no knowledge about Independence Day eve addresses by public figures. In his twitter post, Vajpayee wondered if Nath was going to wish Pakistan on its Independence Day by addressing people of MP on

the day.

Nath, in his address, recounted the achievements of his government during its short tenure of 15 months, saying he endeavoured to change the profile of Madhya Pradesh to turn the state into an investment destination.

Nath said his government that fell in March had initiated steps to establish 'gaushalas' or cowsheds in every panchayat, besides undertaking various social welfare measures.

SOUR | TIES

## Accused browsed internet to find out methods to execute plan

# Kerala youth poisons family for property

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 14

A 22-year-old youth was arrested in Kasargod district of Kerala on the charges of poisoning his 16-year-old sister to death by feeding her ice cream laced with poison and also attempting to kill his parents using the same method.

The police said that the accused Albin Benny had allegedly planned to wipe

out the entire family for inheritance and lead a lavish life with his girlfriend.

While his sister Anne Mary Maria died on August 5, their parents Olikkal Benny and Bessy were also admitted to a hospital after they consumed the ice cream. However, both recovered.

The accused had earlier planned to mix rat poison with chicken curry to kill his sister. However, with the plan not working, the accused browsed the inter-

net to find out other methods for executing his plan and subsequently got the idea of mixing poison with ice cream.

Albin prepared the ice cream at home for carrying out his plan. After having ice cream, Anne Mary started vomiting and also had diarrhoea. She died in a local hospital and everyone suspected it to be death due to food poisoning.

However, the incident took a new turn when

traces of rat poison were found in the post-mortem report which led to suspicion.

Though the accused tried to mislead the family and doctors that he had also consumed the ice cream, on diagnostic tests carried out by health officials no traces of poison were found in his body.

According to locals, the accused had a strange personality. He used to spend time alone and seldom

interacted with the neighbours.

After completing plus two, Albin had secured a job in a hotel in Kottayam district. However, due to Covid-19 lockdown he returned home. He was glued to his mobile phone most of the time, chatting with his girlfriend for long hours. Albin was brought to his house on Friday for evidence collection during which he narrated the entire sequence of the crime.



## IN BRIEF

**Powerful landslide kills 11 in Nepal**

**Kathmandu:** Eleven bodies were recovered Friday after a landslide tore down a village in north-central Nepal, police said, as rescuers dug through mud to find another 27 missing. Mud and stone came hurtling down on the remote hillside village in Sindhupalchowk district in early Friday morning. At least 37 houses have been damaged by the disaster, local police official Madhav Kafle said. "Search and rescue is under way in coordination between the army, police and armed police force," Kafle said. Helicopters are being used to reach the remote site after the landslide blocked roads.

**Virus delays SA circumcision rites**

**Port Elizabeth:** South African 17-year-old Sinoyolo was looking forward to becoming a "man" this year. His uncle had made arrangements for him to travel to the mountains overlooking the South African city of Port Elizabeth in December for his initiation. Known in the local Xhosa language as "Ukwaluko", the secretive rite of passage marks a boy's transition into adulthood. Every June and December thousands of initiates between 15 and 17 years old spend at least three weeks secluded in the bush, where they are circumcised and taught to be responsible men. But this year, for the first time in living memory, the ritual has been called off because of the Coronavirus. "If we send them there and find that one boy is positive (for the virus), it means all 20 of them will be infected," said Afra Msutu, a Xhosa chief. "When you go to the mountains and get circumcised, for the first seven days you are very vulnerable," he added, noting that initiates stay in close quarters with access only to a traditional doctor.

# World leaders praise Israel-UAE agreement

Israel pledges to suspend its planned annexation of Palestinian lands

**Jerusalem, Aug. 14:** World leaders voiced hope Friday that a historic deal between the UAE and Israel could kickstart moribund Middle East peace talks, even as the Palestinians and some of their allies denounced the move to normalise ties as a betrayal of their cause.

Announced by US President Donald Trump on Thursday, it is only the third such accord Israel has struck with an Arab country, and raised the prospect of similar deals with other pro-Western Gulf states.

The deal sees Israel pledge to suspend its planned annexation of Palestinian lands, a concession welcomed by European and some pro-Western Arab governments as a boost for hopes of peace. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stressed Israel was not abandoning its plans to one day annex the Jordan Valley and Jewish settlements across the occupied West Bank.

News of the agreement was broken by Trump, in a tweet hailing a "Huge breakthrough".

He said leaders from the two countries would sign the deal at the White House in around three weeks, evoking memories of previous US-mediated Middle East accords. It could also help boost Trump's reelection hopes in the November US polls.

The Palestinian leadership rejected the deal as a "betrayal" of their cause, saying they would withdraw their ambassador from the Emirates.

Following on Friday prayers in Jerusalem, worshippers outside the Al-Aqsa mosque walked on pictures of UAE strongman Sheikh Mohamed bin

## Iran, Turkey lash out at UAE over deal with Israel

**Tehran, Aug. 14:** Iran and Turkey lashed out at their regional rival the United Arab Emirates on Friday over its decision to normalise diplomatic relations with Israel in a US-brokered deal, accusing it of betraying the Palestinian cause.

Iran's Foreign Ministry called the deal a "dagger that was unjustly struck by the UAE in the backs of the Palestinian people and all Muslims." Turkey said the peoples of the region "will never forget and will never forgive this hypocritical behaviour" by the UAE. The UAE, which has never fought Israel and has quietly been improving ties for years, said the

Zayed Al-Nahyan.

In the West Bank city of Nablus, people set fire to pictures of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, Netanyahu and Trump. In Ramallah, office worker Jihad Hussein said: "The Palestinian people have been stabbed in the back by the Emirates leadership."

Establishing diplomatic ties between Israel and Washington's Middle East allies, including the oil-rich Gulf monarchies, has been central to Trump's regional strategy to contain Iran, also an arch-foe of Israel.

Under the deal, Israel and the UAE "agreed to the full normalisation of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates", according to a joint statement on

agreement put a hold on Israel's plans to unilaterally annex parts of the occupied West Bank, which the Palestinians view as the heartland of their future state.

But the Turkish Foreign Ministry said the UAE had no authority to negotiate with Israel on behalf of the Palestinians or "to make concessions on matters vital to Palestine." The agreement would make the UAE the first Gulf Arab state — and the third Arab country, after Egypt and Jordan — to have full diplomatic ties with Israel.

The Palestinians say the deal amounts to "treason" and have called on Arab

Thursday evening by Trump, Netanyahu and Sheikh Mohamed.

They added that Israel would "suspend declaring sovereignty" over occupied Palestinian West Bank areas — an idea proposed in Trump's controversial peace plan unveiled earlier this year.

Sheikh Mohamed stressed in a tweet that an agreement has been "reached to stop further Israeli annexation of Palestinian territories".

But Netanyahu insisted afterwards that he had only agreed to delay, not cancel, the annexations. The plans remained "on the table", he said.

On Friday the prime minister appointed his national security advisor Meir Ben-Shabbat to lead

the negotiations with the Emiratis.

US Gulf allies Bahrain and Oman welcomed the annexation deal, and Egypt, the only other Arab country to have a formal peace treaty with Israel, praised a deal that would scrap annexation. Thanking them Netanyahu said the "peace treaty" with the UAE "is expanding the circle of peace".

The European Union said normalisation would benefit both Israel and the UAE, but foreign policy spokeswoman Nabila Massrali stressed the bloc's commitment to a two-state solution. "We are, of course, ready to work on the resumption of the negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians," she said. — *AFP*

## NZ EXTENDS CITY LOCKDOWN TO STAMP OUT VIRUS

**Wellington, Aug. 14:** Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern extended a lockdown in New Zealand's largest city on Friday, giving health authorities more time to trace and contain a strain of Coronavirus previously unseen in the country.

Ardern said stay-at-home orders would remain in force across Auckland until Aug. 26 in a bid to prevent a mystery outbreak from becoming a fully blown second wave.

Genomic tests indicated the latest infections were not the same strain of Coronavirus recorded in New Zealand earlier this year.

"This suggests it's not a case of the virus being dormant, or of burning embers in our community, it appears to be new to New Zealand," Ardern said. She added that tests were also unable to link the outbreak to any cases among quarantined travellers from overseas. — *AFP*

## AFGHANISTAN BEGINS TO FREE 400 PRISONERS

**Kabul, Aug. 14:** Afghan authorities on Friday said they had started to release 400 Taliban prisoners, the final hurdle in long-delayed peace talks between the two warring sides, even as President Ashraf Ghani warned they were a "danger to the world".

The Afghan government and the Taliban are set to meet within days of the prisoner release being completed, in a move that has drawn widespread condemnation after it emerged many of the inmates were involved in attacks that killed scores of Afghans and foreigners. — *AFP*

# Don stokes false birther theory about Harris

**Washington, Aug. 14:** US President Donald Trump said on Thursday he had heard Democratic vice-presidential running mate Kamala Harris was not eligible to serve, stoking a false claim echoing the baseless "birther" theory he promoted about Barack Obama.

At a White House news conference, Trump was asked about "claims circulating on social media" that Harris was not eligible and whether he could say she met the legal requirements for vice-president.

"I heard it today that she doesn't meet the requirements. And, by the way, the lawyer that wrote that piece is a very highly qualified, very talented lawyer. I have no idea if that's right," Trump said.

"I would have assumed the Democrats would have checked that out before she gets chosen to run for vice-president," he said.

"But that's a very serious — you're saying that — they're saying that she doesn't qualify because she wasn't born in this country," but in Kenya. Even after Obama submitted a copy of his birth certificate that showed his birthplace as Hawaii, Trump alleged it was a fake. During his 2016 election campaign, Trump finally dropped his claims. The reporter replied that Harris was born in the United States but her parents might not have been permanent residents at the time.

Trump appeared to be referring to a Newsweek op-ed by a conservative law professor wrongly claiming the California senator was not eligible to serve as vice-president or president because of the immigration status of her parents when she was born. — *AFP*



Donald Trump

## TRUMP SAYS U.S. WILL COLLAPSE IF BIDEN IS ELECTED

**Washington, Aug. 14:** President Donald Trump has said that the US would collapse and become the world's laughing stock if the Democratic Party's presumptive nominee Joe Biden wins the November 3 presidential elections.

Trump said Biden's proposed policies were not good for the country.

"Today, we saw Joe Biden continue to politicise a pandemic and to show his appalling lack of respect for the American people. That's what it is. At every turn, Biden has been wrong about the virus, ignoring the scientific evidence and putting left-wing politics before facts and evidence," Trump told reporters on Thursday at the White House. — *PTI*

Harris was born in Oakland, California in 1964 to a father from Jamaica and a mother from India.

Trump earned national political prominence by promoting the "birther" lie that Obama, America's first black president, was not born in the United States. — *AFP*



Ministry of Information & Broadcasting  
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# Independence Day

Greetings to all fellow citizens

## Jai Hind

15th August is a day to pay homage to all those greats who worked hard for India's freedom. Their struggles continue to give strength to millions. Independence Day is an occasion to reaffirm our commitment to build an India that would make our respected freedom fighters proud.

- Narendra Modi

Independence Day Ceremony at the ramparts of Red Fort to be live telecast by Doordarshan 6:25 a.m. onwards



# BIGGIES ON BOARD

## Tata Group joins race to be IPL title sponsor

New Delhi, Aug. 14: Multinational conglomerate Tata Group has submitted its 'Expression of Interest' to become IPL title sponsor this year, joining education technology company Unacademy and fantasy sports platform Dream11 in a bid to replace Chinese mobile phone company Vivo for one season.

Friday was the last date of submission of 'EOI' to the Board of Control for Cricket in India. The IPL will be held from September 19 to November 10 in the UAE this year and the winning bidder will hold the rights for four months and 13 days.

Tata Group's entry into the fray makes the bidding war on August 18 very interesting as BCCI is expecting that the winning bid will not be much lower than Vivo's ₹440 crore annual contract even though the rights period is of a short duration.

"Yes, Tata Group has submitted their Expression of Interest to buy IPL title rights," a group spokesperson said.

A source in the BCCI earlier confirmed the submission of EOIs from the other two companies.

"The EOI doesn't have to mention the bid amount. It will be sent on August 18," the official said. — PTI

● **Tata Group's entry into the fray makes the bidding war on August 18 very interesting as BCCI is expecting that the winning bid will not be much lower than Vivo's ₹440 crore annual contract even though the rights period is of a short duration.**



Chennai Super Kings players Piyush Chawla (from left), Suresh Raina, Monu Singh, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Karn Sharma and Deepak Chahar fly on a special flight to Chennai on Friday.

## CSK get their stars back at den

C. SANTOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, AUG. 14

Three-time champions Chennai Super Kings have stolen a march over their IPL rivals by managing to assemble their core team in the city for a five-day training camp starting on Saturday at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium. The team will shake off the rust before they leave for Dubai on August 21. The 13th edition of the tournament starts on September 19 in the UAE.

Chennai Super Kings Captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, his second in-command Suresh Raina, batsman Ambati Rayudu, bowlers Deepak Chahar, Piyush Chawla, Kedar Jadhav, Karn Sharma and

● **Chennai Super Kings flew in their top players via a chartered flight and are all set to resume training for the IPL. Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Suresh Raina, Ambati Rayudu were among the cricketers to arrive in Chennai on Friday.**

others arrived in Chennai by a chartered flight on Friday afternoon.

They headed straight to a star hotel where an entire block is reserved for the team. CSK officials and their social media team who will accompany the team to the UAE are also staying in the same hotel.

"The chartered flight had stopovers in Pune, Delhi, Ranchi and Hyderabad before bringing the players together to Chennai. All of them had tested negative at

their respective cities. There will be two more testings in Chennai — during camp — before they leave by another chartered flight to Dubai. All the foreign players will come directly to Dubai in batches," said a CSK team official.

Allrounder Ravindra Jadeja, who opted out of the Chennai camp due to personal reasons, will join the squad in Dubai.

**Mini bubble at MAC**

With players from the

three-times IPL champions set to begin their training on Saturday, the M.A. Chidambaram stadium has been turned into a bubble. Around 100 people, including Tamil Nadu Cricket Association staff, grounds-men, security and drivers, have been tested. The camp will be held behind closed doors.

"Even the media will not be allowed in. We have already handpicked net bowlers who will travel with the team to the UAE. Those players too were tested and none of them were positive. They are also staying in the team hotel. We have sent a car to Coimbatore to pick up N. Jagadeesan, Tamil Nadu wicket-keeper batsman," the CSK official said.

## REIGNING US CHAMP BIANCA WITHDRAWS

New York, Aug. 14: Novak Djokovic boosted the US Open by saying on Thursday that he will play in the Grand Slam tennis event while reigning women's champion Bianca Andreescu joined a host of notable no-shows.

"After many discussions with those closest to me, I have made the difficult decision not to return to New York this year," Andreescu said in a statement.

"I have taken this step in order to focus on my match fitness and ensure that I return ready to play at my highest level."

"The US Open victory last year has been the high point of my career thus far and I will miss not being there," Andreescu said.

"However, I realise that the unforeseen challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic, have compromised my ability to prepare and compete to the degree necessary to play at my highest level," she added.

**Serena beats sister**

Meanwhile, Serena Williams rallied to defeat sister Venus Williams 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in a second-round matchup of Grand Slam champions at the WTA Top Seed Open in Lexington, Kentucky.

Top-seeded Serena, a 23-time Grand Slam winner, said the victory will boost her confidence heading into the US Open as she improved to 19-12 in the 22-year-old rivalry with Venus. Serena smacked a cross-court forehand winner to break Venus for a 2-1 lead in the third set, then dropped the next four games, only to break again in the seventh on another cross-court winner, then held to 4-4. — AFP



Tyler Adams (right) of Leipzig celebrates his goal with teammates during their UEFA Champions League quarter-final match against Atletico Madrid at the Jose Alvalade stadium in Lisbon on Thursday. Leipzig won 2-1. — AFP

## ATM overdraft, lose to Leipzig

Lisbon, Aug. 14: Leipzig stunned Atletico Madrid 2-1 on Thursday to reach the Champions League semi-finals for the first time as Tyler Adams' 88th-minute winner earned them a showdown with Paris Saint-Germain.

Atletico looked to have secured extra-time at the Estadio Jose Alvalade when Joao Felix won and then scored a penalty to cancel out Dani Olmo's headed opener early in the second half.

But Adams proved an unlikely hero for Leipzig, coming off the bench to snatch victory in Lisbon after his fired effort took a cruel deflection of Stefan Savic and flew in.

The win marks an historic night for Leipzig, who were only formed 11 years ago and played their first ever season in Germany's top flight in 2016.

Progress to the last four also puts another feather in the cap of their coach Julian Nagelsmann, whose

stock will rise even further after ousting Diego Simeone, one of this competition's most gnarly tacticians.

**CITY TAKE ON LYON**

Manchester City finally have a marquee victory in the knockout stages of the Champions League after seeing off Real Madrid to reach the last eight, but they want much more with Pep Guardiola insisting they cannot be satisfied. "I just spoke with the scouting department about Lyon and they told me to be alert," warned Guardiola after Lyon shocked Juventus in the Last 16.

The French side also showed what they are capable of in taking four points from a possible six against City in the group stages of in last season's Champions League. — AFP

**LIVE ON TV**

**Champions League quarter-final: Manchester City vs Lyon from 12.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD.**

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