

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky. Rain/thundershowers in some areas likely. Max & min temp 32/26 degree celsius
RAINFALL: 44.3 mm
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
Max: 97% Min: 77%
TEMPERATURE
Max: 31.8°C (80) Min: 27.3°C (+1)
SUN RISES 05:17 hrs
SUN SETS 18:02 hrs
MOON RISES 06:33 hrs
MOON SETS 19:17 hrs
First quarter of moon 2 Sept.

THUMBNAILS

SC asks TN to start counselling for medical seats as per NEET: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Tamil Nadu government to start counselling for admissions for MBBS and BDS seats in the state based on the NEET merit list and complete the process by 4 September. A Bench headed by Justice Dipak Misra directed the state government to initiate the admission process after the Centre told the court that it was not in favour of the recent ordinance passed by Tamil Nadu to exempt it from the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) this year.

Jha, Sarkar, Sardar to get Khel Ratna: Paralympics double gold medalist and world record holder Devendra Pratap Singh Jha has been named as the recipient of this year's Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award along with former India hockey team captain Sardar Singh. Jha has won gold in men's javelin F46 event at the 2004 Paralympics in Athens with a then world record distance of 62.15 metres. It was the first gold medal for India at the Paralympics since Mumbai's Pankaj Advani won the top of the podium in men's 50m freestyle swimming at Heidelberg, Germany in 1972.

Trump rejects US pull out from Afghanistan, warns Pakistan: Ruling out a hasty withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, President Donald Trump issued the sternest warning yet by a US leader to Pakistan for providing safe haven to terrorists and sought an enhanced role for India in bringing peace in the war-ravaged country. Trump, in his first prime-time televised address to war-weary Americans, laid out his South Asia policy saying a "critical part" of it was to further develop US strategic partnership with India.

Barca seeking 8.5 million euros from Neymar over contract breach: Barcelona are seeking at least 8.5 million euros (\$10 million) from Neymar for breach of contract, the club said as the bitter fallout rumbles on from his world record 222-million-euro move to Paris Germain. "In this lawsuit, the club demands the amount already paid as a bonus for the renewal of his contract for breach of contract, 8.5 million euros in damages, and an additional 10 percent in interests," Barcelona said in a statement. Neymar signed a five-year deal with Barca in 2016.



Bank strike total in WB: All public sector, private and foreign banks were closed in West Bengal while some ATMs ran dry during the bank strike on Tuesday, called by the United Forum of Banking Unions, the umbrella body of trade unions in the banking sector.

SC STRIKES DOWN VALIDITY OF INSTANT DIVORCE BY A MAJORITY OF 3:2. TWO JUDGES DIFFER

'Triple talaq invalid'

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 22 AUGUST

In a landmark judgment upholding the Muslim women's equality and empowerment rights, the Supreme Court on Tuesday struck down instant triple talaq (divorce) or talaq-e-biddat — a 1400-year-old practice among sections of the Muslim community — quashing it on several grounds including that it was against the tenets of the Holy Quran and that it violated the Islamic law Shariat.

A five-judge Constitution Bench, by a majority of 3:2 in which Chief Justice of India JS Khehar was in minority, ruled, "In view of the different opinions recorded, by a majority of 3:2 the practice of 'talaq-e-biddat' — triple talaq is set aside."

Talaq-e-biddat, an irrevocable form of divorce, is three simultaneous pronouncements of talaq to a woman by her husband.

Three judges — Justices Kurian Joseph, R F Nariman and UU Lalit — disagreed with the CJ and Justice SA Nazeer on the key issue whether triple talaq was fundamental to Islam.

The majority verdict ruled that the practice of divorce through instant triple talaq among Muslims is void, illegal and unconstitutional.

While CJ Khehar and

Justice Nazeer gave injunction against instant triple talaq for six months, asking the central government to come out with a law in this regard by then, Justices Joseph, Nariman and Lalit held it as violative of the Constitution.

The majority verdict said the practice of triple talaq was against the tenets of Quran and was also arbitrary. The three separate judgements ran into 395 pages.

The apex court's verdict was instantly hailed by the petitioners comprising several affected Muslim women including Shara Bano, Ishrat Jahan, Aafreen Rehman — who were given instant triple talaq by their husbands through speed post or over telephone — as well as Zakia Soman of the Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMMA).

It was also welcomed by a slew of leaders and parties — including the ruling BJP, the principal Opposition Congress and the Left parties — across the political spectrum.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the apex court's verdict, calling it "historic". He said it "grants equality to Muslim women and is a powerful measure for women empowerment".

The Centre had opposed triple talaq in the apex court.

Writing the majority judgment, Justice Joseph



said, "I find it extremely difficult to agree with the CJ that the practice of triple talaq has to be considered inferior to religious denomination in question and that the same is part of their personal law." This view was shared by Justices Nariman and Lalit.

Referring to the verses of Quran various issues said, "They are clear and unambiguous as far as talaq is concerned. The

- 1 Instant triple talaq barred till Parliament makes law: Supreme Court
- 2 Five senior-most judges from five different faiths announced the verdict
- 3 Absence of a woman judge on this crucial panel had drawn criticism

Holy Quran has attributed sanctity and permanence to matrimony. However, in extremely unavoidable situations, talaq is permissible. But an attempt for reconciliation, and if it succeeds, then

revocation, are the Quranic essential steps before talaq attains finality. In triple talaq, this door is closed. Hence triple talaq is against the basic tenets of the Holy Quran and

is against the Quranic essential steps before talaq attains finality. In triple talaq, this door is closed. Hence triple talaq is against the basic tenets of the Holy Quran and

Judgment of the Hon'ble SC on triple talaq is historic. It grants equality to Muslim women and is a powerful measure for women empowerment.



NARENDRA MODI

Welcome the Supreme Court decision setting aside instant triple talaq. I congratulate the women who fought for justice.



-RAHUL GANDHI

I welcome the Supreme Court judgment on instant triple talaq. Its a victory 4 brave Muslim women who have waged battle against it for years.

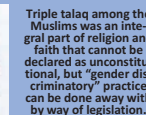


SHABANA AZMI

Triple talaq among the Muslims was an integral part of religion and faith that cannot be declared as unconstitutional, but "gender discriminatory" practice can be done away with by way of legislation.



Justice JS Khehar



Justice Abdul Nazeer

Doklam: China wants troop withdrawal

AGENCIES
BEIJING, 22 AUGUST

China said today that the only way to end the standoff in Doklam was for India to unconditionally withdraw its troops from the area, a day after Home Minister Rajnath Singh hoped Beijing would soon make a "positive" move.

Singh yesterday had hoped that a solution to the standoff in Doklam would be found soon and said India never attacked a nation nor did it harbour any expansionist behaviour. In a speech, he had also expressed the hope that China will undertake a positive initiative to resolve the standoff.

But China responded with its standard propaganda attack by repeating its accusation that Indian troops "illegally crossed the boundary".

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said India's onus was to stop the Chinese road building activity in Doklam area were "ridiculous". "So the only prerequisite and condition of this incident is unconditional withdrawal of the Indian troops and equipment," Hua told reporters.

India and China have been locked in a standoff for more than two months in Doklam near the Sikkim sector. The faceoff began after Indian troops stopped Chinese military from building a road India believes would allow Beijing to cut its access to the northeastern states.

Bhutan says Doklam belongs to it but China claims sovereignty over the area. China's state media has written shrill commentaries over the stand-



off and has even released a video which portrayed Indians in a very poor taste.

In a separate incident on August 15, Indian and Chinese troops engaged in stone pelting in Ladakh region that resulted in minor injuries to soldiers on both the sides.

Hua said China "loves peace and firmly upholds peace". "At the same time, we will safeguard our territorial sovereignty and integrity".

"We will not allow any country or any individual to infringe upon China's territorial sovereignty," she said. Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Gov-

ernor N N Vohra called on Home Minister Rajnath Singh today and discussed with him various issues including repeated ceasefire violations by Pakistani forces, officials said.

During the 30-minute meeting in Delhi, the Governor apprised Singh of the prevailing situation in the Kashmir Valley and steps taken for restoring normalcy.

They also discussed, among other issues, the ceasefire violations from across the border, increasing infiltration attempts and the incidence of terrorism in the Valley.

A 40-year-old woman was killed in firing by the Pakistani Army on border villages in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on August 12.

Pakistan violated the ceasefire four times on 13 August.

42 civilians dead in US-led strike on Raqqa

BEIRUT, 22 AUGUST

At least 42 civilians were killed in a barrage of US-led air strikes on Islamic State group territory in the Syrian city of Raqqa, a monitor said.

Nineteen children and 12 women were among those killed in the raids, which hit several neighbourhoods in the north-eastern city, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights told AFP today.

The toll marked the second consecutive day of ferocious bombardment on Raqqa, more than half of which has been captured by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces battling IS. At least 250 US-led air strikes have pounded Raqqa and surrounding areas.

TN govt in a minority after rebels pull out

CHENNAI, 22 AUGUST

Contrary to expectations, 19 MLAs belonging to the TTV Dinakaran faction withdrew support to chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswamy a day after the merger of two ADAMK factions, reducing the government to a minority and resulting in a constitutional crisis. The factions were of the belief that Dinakaran, who is already hooked to various cases against him, would never go in for such a drastic decision.

Mr Tamang told The Statesman that the state cannot keep inviting parties for talks through Press conferences or public speeches. "There has to be something official," he said. He added that his party will certainly discuss lifting the indefinite shutdown.

The GNLF claimed that the party was the first to break the confidence that more MLAs will switch sides in the coming days. Adding fuel to the boiling political situation, Dinakaran, the deputy general secretary of the ADAMK, expelled R Vaithilingam, the newly appointed deputy coordinator of the party steering committee constituted by the merged factions, from the party.



STATERMAN NEWS SERVICE

Immediately after the development, the Leader of the Opposition and DMK working president M K Stalin demanded that the Governor must call for a floor test in the Assembly. The DMK originally planned to bring a no-confidence motion in the Assembly by the end of this month when the time frame of six months expires since the last confidence motion was taken up in the Assembly.

The Palaniswamy government is a minority in the House, which has an effective strength of 234. One seat is lying vacant following the demise of former chief minister Jayalalitha. In addition to this, M Karunanidhi, the DMK chief, is confined to bed due to a series of ailments and would not be able to make it to the House, bringing the total strength of the House to 232.

The government led by Palaniswamy now has the support of 133 members following the merger. But if the 19 MLAs of the Dinakaran faction join hands with the 98 MLAs of the Opposition, the Palaniswamy government will lose in the ensuing trust vote. "Palaniswamy has lost the right to govern and should submit his resignation," said Saraswathy, a close confidante of Sasikala.

CM says govt will hold all-party Hill talks on 29 Aug

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA/SILIGURI, 22 AUGUST

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today announced that the state government is ready for holding an all-party meeting on 29 August at Nabanna to resolve the current impasse in the Hills of Darjeeling.

The state government's decision is in response to a request of the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) for 'high level intervention', Miss Banerjee said.

She said all major political parties of Darjeeling would be called at the meeting along with the heads of the development boards in the Hills.

Asked whether an invitation would be extended to the Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJMM), the chief ministers said she was speaking of all parties in general and not about any particular one.

There are five or six major parties and we will ask all of them to attend the meeting. In fact, all those who matter will be asked to attend the meeting which is aimed at restoring peace. So, any positive-minded party which is in favour of development and peace is welcome," she said at a Press conference at Nabanna.

Without naming the GJMM, Miss Banerjee said that some of the parties were fomenting trouble, but the situation had slightly improved. Police maintained restraint, she said, adding that the government had already incurred huge losses and both private and government property had been damaged.

"The doors of discussion



should always be open. Our government is positive and constructive. So, we have responded to the GNLF's letter within 24 hours," she said.

Hailing the GNLF's letter which Miss Banerjee claimed was mailed to her yesterday, she said it was a positive sign from the GNLF "which is a very old party". Miss Banerjee asserted she had repeatedly

said that the state government was open to dialogue and had chaired a meeting with the heads of development boards at Nabanna on 17 June. Thereafter, chief secretary Moly De called a meeting on 22 June in Siliguri, but it was boycotted by all the parties.

The GNLF's letter stated it apprehended that the "system" was not allowing any country or any individual to infringe upon China's territorial sovereignty," she said. Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Gov-

would request you for a high level intervention on a view to ending the present crisis of the Hills," read the letter written by Mr Mann Ghisingh, GNLF president to Miss Banerjee. The letter further stated: "My party is deeply concerned about the day to day deteriorating condition of the people of Hill areas and if the situation is allowed to be continued the system may collapse. I also apprehend that the situation in Darjeeling will go beyond control if the present crisis is left unattended." The GJMM said it would await the state government's "official invitation" for talks and then chart its future course of action.

"We can't say anything on the talks invite right now. We will wait for an official invite, and then comment," GJMM

assistant secretary Binoy Tamang told reporters in Darjeeling.

Mr Tamang told The Statesman that the state cannot keep inviting parties for talks through Press conferences or public speeches. "There has to be something official," he said. He added that his party will certainly discuss lifting the indefinite shutdown.

The GNLF claimed that the party was the first to break the confidence that more MLAs will switch sides in the coming days. Adding fuel to the boiling political situation, Dinakaran, the deputy general secretary of the ADAMK, expelled R Vaithilingam, the newly appointed deputy coordinator of the party steering committee constituted by the merged factions, from the party.