

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VISAKHAPATNAM | SATURDAY | 19 SEPTEMBER 2020

## WEATHER

Max: 33.8°C  
Min: 26.6°C  
RH: 84%  
Rainfall: Trace  
Forecast: Mist.  
Max/Min temp.  
33/26°C

## COVID-19 COUNT

| CASES            | DEATHS   |
|------------------|----------|
| (+99,627)        | (+1,275) |
| 53,05,387        | 85,621   |
| covid19india.org |          |

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| (+2,043)     | (+11) |
| TS: 1,67,046 | 1,016 |
| (+8,096)     | (+67) |
| AP: 6,09,558 | 5,244 |

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

|                               |        |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| 3,04,93,112                   | DEATHS |
| 9,52,300                      |        |
| COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES    | 213    |
| worldometers.info/coronavirus |        |

## ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana  
Tithi: Adhika-Ashwasya Shuddha  
Dwitiya till 9.11 am and then  
Tadya till 5.38 am (Sunday)  
Star: Chitta till 1.21 am (Sunday)  
Varjyan: 11.11 am to 12.36 pm  
Durmuhratam: 6.08 am to

Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 noon  
HJRI CALENDAR

Safar ul Muzaffar 1, 1442 AH

## PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.50 am  
Zohar: 1.30 pm  
Asar: 4.45 pm  
Magrib: 6.15 pm  
Isha: 8.15 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.56 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.45 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 7.27 PM  
MOONSET TODAY 7.27 AM

## COUNTER POINT



Thank God,  
there is no data!

## IN BRIEF

Paytm restored  
on Play store

New Delhi: Google on Friday restored the Paytm app on its Play store after removing it for a few hours for violating its policy on sports betting activities. The app was back on the Google Play store on Friday evening after the Softbank-backed Paytm removed the 'cash-back' feature from a recently-launched game on the application.

Monsoon might  
be over soon: IMD

New Delhi: The Southwest Monsoon is likely to start withdrawing by the end of next week, the IMD said on Friday, while Odisha is bracing for heavy rainfall due to a fresh low pressure area which is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal around September 20. Rains eluded Delhi for the eleventh consecutive day on Friday, despite a rain forecast,

AP bars reopen  
after 6 months

Amaravati: After nearly six months of closure due to the Coronavirus-induced lockdown, bars would be reopened in Andhra Pradesh from Saturday. The state government, however, decided to levy a 20 per cent 'Covid-19 fee' on the basic licence of bars and also a 10 per cent additional retail excise tax on liquor.

Report on Page 4



## NATION | 5

Chinese intel mounts pressure on Muivah



## WORLD | 5

China flies 18 warplanes during US, Taiwan talks

## SPORTS | 6

Duplantis breaks Bubka's 26-yr-old pole vault record



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## CORONAVIRUS AFFECTS ORGAN DONATION TOO

KANIZA GARARI | DC  
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 18

The waiting list for organs like kidneys, livers, corneas and heart valves has lengthened to more than six months after the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown.

Patients who had registered with Jeevandan, the government scheme, and with private hospitals face a long wait as it is difficult to carry out elective transplant procedures.

According to the guidelines issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research, only emergency cases where the patients are suffering from chronic failure of organs must be taken up.

Doctors are facing a challenge wherein brain dead patients are acquiring infections in the intensive care unit. These infections are leading to Covid-19 in most cases, making it difficult to harvest organs.

Those brain dead patients in facilities where infection control is upgraded can facilitate organ harvesting but their numbers are very low.

Dr Ch. Madhusudhan, head of the department of surgical gastroenterology and liver specialist at Osmania General Hospital, stated "The risk factors in brain dead donors are also high. Since they are in intensive care units, it has been noted that they are acquiring Covid-19 and that makes it difficult to harvest their organs. Those who are not infected by Covid, are very few. Infection control measures have been upgraded by all hospitals and we are only now, in the month of September, seeing a few cadaver donations."



Farmers raise slogans during a protest outside the residence of former chief minister Parkash Singh Badal against three agriculture related Bills, at Badal village in Sri Muktsar Sahib in Punjab on Friday.

— PTI

## BJP lets Akalis quit govt with eye on Punjab polls

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 18

With less than two years to go for the Punjab Assembly elections, BJP leaders consider Prime Minister Narendra Modi's acceptance of Harsimrat Kaur Badal's resignation from the Union Cabinet over the farm Bills as a move to free the party from the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD).

For many years, the BJP's Punjab unit has been urging the central leadership to go it alone in the state as it felt that the party was not growing organisationally because it had to limit itself to urban areas as the villages are considered the SAD's stronghold.

While the central BJP is yet to react to Badal's resignation and to speculate about the continuation of the SAD in the NDA, the BJP's Punjab unit chief Ashwini

Sharma said Badal's resignation was the SAD's "political decision" and that the party was still part of the NDA.

Harsimrat Badal, who was holding the food processing industries portfolio in the Union Cabinet, resigned on Thursday and her portfolio has been allocated to agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Friday.

Speculation is rife that the BJP has started the groundwork for the 2022 Assembly polls and is in touch with former SAD leader Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa and some state leaders are in touch with Navjot Singh Sidhu, the Congress leader.

According to the BJP's feedback, many urban voters, including youths, were unwilling to support the BJP in Punjab because of its alliance with the SAD. After the 2015 sacrilege controversy and the recent controversy over

the missing "swaroop" of Guru Granth Sahib, many Panthaks have been disappointed with the SAD. However, no prominent Sikh leader has joined the BJP because of its alliance with the SAD, stunting its growth in the state.

Showing up fault lines between the oldest allies in the NDA, the BJP enrolled a significant number of members in the Malwa region, considered to be the Badal family's stronghold, in spite of the SAD's objection.

On its part, the SAD was angry with the Modi government not heeding to its request to reconsider the introduction of agriculture Bills as its core supporters, primarily the Panthaks and farmers.

Earlier, the trouble began when during the introduction of the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provision) Bill by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Opposition members criticised the

House was taking up listed business.

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Chairman that the matter

will be looked into," Singh told reporters later outside Parliament.

He said cases had been

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## Anurag's remark sets off LS furore

Minister accuses Gandhis of corruption when Oppn criticised Centre for PM-Cares Fund

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 18

There was high drama in the Lok Sabha as minister of state for finance Anurag Thakur made disparaging remarks about the Nehru-Gandhi family, which led to several adjournments, as Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Choudhury called him "a chokra from Himachal Pradesh".

Later, the proceedings resumed only at 6 pm after four adjournments, when Mr Thakur "apologised" to the House, saying he was "pained" if his words had hurt anyone, on the insistence of Speaker Om Birla.

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when during the introduction of the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provision) Bill by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Opposition members criticised the

PM-Cares fund's validity. Mr Thakur counter-attacked immediately and accused the Gandhi family of "cheating" people by pooling public money through creation of various funds.

After criticism by opposition parties, Thakur apologised to the House on the insistence of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

PM-Cares fund's validity. Mr Thakur counter-attacked immediately and accused the Gandhi family of "cheating" people by pooling public money through creation of various funds under different names.

This irked the Opposition and Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Choudhury lashed out at Mr Thakur, calling him a "chokra", demanding an apology for maligning the Nehru-Gandhi family.

## Rules cited, RS doesn't hear AAP MP's plea on UP cases

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 18

AAP leader and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh on Friday tried to raise the issue of FIRs filed against him, including for alleged sedition, by the UP government in the Rajya Sabha on Friday but was not allowed to do so as

the House was taking up listed business.

"In the Rajya Sabha, 37 MPs from 12 parties, including the Congress and the NCP, supported me and I was also present in the Rajya Sabha Chairman that the matter will be looked into," Singh told reporters later outside Parliament.

He said cases had been

## AP yet to clear medical oxygen supply dues

14 docs die in Covid care, no relief given

D. SIVA  
RAMI REDDI | DC  
KURNool, SEPT. 18

At least 14 government doctors died of Covid-19 while rendering their services in Andhra Pradesh so far. Yet none of them received any compensation so far.

The Central government announced ₹50 lakh while it also said it will give another ₹50 lakh, said a doctor.

Doctors are risking their

lives for nothing.

In Kurnool district alone, three doctors died of Covid-19 while providing medical services, said a doctor.

One doctor worked continuously for seven days without taking a break during the height of the virus spread, when the case load was between 800-1000 per day in Kurnool district.

Doctors are risking their

supplier based in Visakhapatnam said, "We used to get medical oxygen from manufacturers at about ₹12.50 per cubic metre before Covid-19. At present, it costs ₹19-21. Though the Drugs Control Administration has fixed

its cost at ₹16.50, it is available to the end user at ₹17.49 including handling, transport and other costs. We supply medical oxygen to dealers on one-month credit basis. Some dealers complained of not receiving their payments from

government hospitals."

Sources privy to this development say the state government owes ₹2 crore on an average to each dealer since the outbreak of Covid-19 in March.

A dealer from Guntur said, "We are borrowing money to pay suppliers of medical oxygen, so that we can continue the supply to government hospitals, as it is essential for saving the lives of Covid-19 patients. As we were not paid for months, we are even planning to serve a notice that no medical oxygen supplies will be made unless dues are cleared."

Medical education director Dr. K. Venkatesh said, "We have no issues of payment with our long-term suppliers of medical oxygen, as they supply us on credit basis. We will pay them once we get a budget grant. However, there may be issues with short-term suppliers, whom collectors have roped in. Those dues will also be cleared after grants are released."

He stated that no standing passengers would be allowed in buses.

Given the examinations

being conducted for the posts in the Village and Ward secretariats, the city buses would resume services from Saturday in Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam cities.

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## SHORT TAKES

**Brahmotsavams to conclude Sept. 27**

**From Page 1:** Brahmotsavams will conclude on September 27 with Chakrasnanam, which will be observed at Swamy Pushkarini in Tirumala in ekantham. Important events include Garuda Vahanam on September 23, Golden Chariot on 24, Rathotsavam on 26th and Chakra Snamam on September 27. All vahana sevas will be held inside the temple. TTD chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy, along with senior officials like Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singh, Additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy, JEO P. Basant Kumar and CV&SO Gopinath Jatti oversaw the preparations to ensure fool-proof celebrations amid the wonderfully illuminated landscape.

**₹1 CESS ON PETROL, DIESEL PER LITRE**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 18

The Andhra Pradesh government has issued an ordinance amending the AP Value Added Tax Act, 2005 to levy and collect a road development cess of ₹1 per litre of petrol and diesel in the state.

The Governor promulgated the ordinance here on Friday and, accordingly, all the proceeds of road development cess, estimated at around ₹500 crore per annum, are to be transferred to AP road development corporation for exclusive use in the development of road infrastructure in the state.

Revenue special chief secretary, Dr Rajat Bhargava, justified the levy of the one rupee cess on petrol and diesel by saying that the revenues of the state plummeted to ₹1,323 crore in April, 2020 against ₹4,480 crore in April, 2019 following the cessation of all economic activity due to the lockdown. He said that similar trends were observed in state revenues for the months of May, June, July, August, 2020 and added that the centre also had not released AP's share of GST compensation for 2020-21 so far.

**EX-OFFICIAL ALLEGES ₹800-CR SCAM IN APSFL**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 18

A former official of APSFL alleged that an ₹800 crore scam was conducted during the previous Telugu Desam government.

K. Gouri Sankar, former ED, business operations, APSFL, alleged that about ₹800 crore was siphoned off in Andhra Pradesh State Fibernet Limited (APSFL) during the previous TD government. Addressing the media here on Friday he alleged that Venuri Hari Krishna Prasad, former adviser APSFL, was involved in the scam and awarded contracts related to APSFL to companies related to his kith and kin.

Alleging that Prasad operated various illegal activities, giving contracts to his sister concerns like Tera Soft and Netops fiber solutions LLP, Carpus solutions and other companies, Mr Sankar stated that Mr Prasad gave a ₹320 crore per year fiber laying tender to Terra Soft and got kickbacks. He further alleged that the eligibility clause for participating in the Phase I fiber laying tender was fabricated to clinch the order. He called for an open debate on the various scams in APSFL committed by Prasad.

**YSRC DEMANDS CBI PROBE IN AMARAVATI SCAM**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 18

YSR Congress MPs continued their protest at the Mahatma Gandhi statue in Parliament for the second day on Friday, demanding a CBI probe into Amaravati land and AP Fibernet scams.

Speaking on the occasion, YSR Congress general secretary and MP V. Vijaya Sai Reddy said the High Court stay on SIT probe and gag order on the media were not in the true spirit of Constitution and democracy.

Citing Sections of Prevention of Corruption Act, Mr Reddy said the stay was not justified unless there were special and extraordinary circumstances. He was of the view that judiciary could order a CBI probe instead of staying the investigation by SIT.

## Monsoon musings



Above: Irrigation officials open all crest gates of Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada on Friday

Left: Sudden rainfall in Vijayawada on Friday.

Right: Uppalaguptam tahsildar I. Padmavathi visits S Yanam seashore to inspect breaches on Friday. — DC



# Arrest of BJP men creates tension in Amalapuram

**Chamber of Commerce gave a call to traders to voluntarily close shutters**

**VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC**  
KAKINADA, SEPT. 18

Tension gripped Amalapuram in East Godavari district on Friday as BJP leaders and activists tried to lay siege of the RDO office in protest against chariot burning incident at Antarvedi in Sakhineeti mandal in Konaseema.

According to police, as many as 291 activists were arrested in the last two days. Of them, 70 were detained on Friday and released on bail by evening. The police seized all roads towards Amalapuram and Antarvedi and it looked like a curfew situation with people of the town preferring to stay indoors.

Amalapuram Chamber of Commerce earlier gave a call to traders to voluntarily close their shutters.

According to sources, some leaders who eluded arrest came on to the streets and raised slogans.

Meanwhile, party workers made an attempt to storm the office of the Revenue Divisional Office to register their protest against the chariot burning incident at Antarvedi temple.

Those who tried to storm the RDO office included MLC PVN. Madhav, state General Secretary Vetukuri Suryanarayana Raju, Amalapuram district president M. Ayyaji Vema, S. Yamini. The



— DECCAN CHRONICLE

### BJP'S PROTEST POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, SAYS VEDIKA

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 18

Brahmana Adhyana Vediaka has termed BJP's protests politically motivated. YSR Congress leader and BAV member Komuri Satish Sarma on

Friday took exception to BJP's call for 'chalo Amalapuram' to protest burning of the chariot at Antarvedi temple. Even though the government ordered a CBI probe, the BJP was trying to stoke trouble. Addressing a

press conference at Guntur, he said that the chariot burning incident was unfortunate and the government swiftly responded by ordering a CBI probe and sanctioning funds for a new chariot.

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who went to Antarvedi.

Mr Madhav said the party's state President Somu Veerajra had given a call and in response they had gone to Amalapuram to submit a petition to officials and stage a peaceful protest.

Eluru Range DIG clarified that prohibitory orders under Section 144 and Section 30 were in force and therefore, the police did not allow groups of people and crowds of people to stage protests.

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Eluru Range DIG clarified

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offers the power of diesel in  
advanced automatic



Smart Pure Air Purifier with  
Virus Protection ensures you  
breathe the cleanest of  
air inside



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Touchscreen Navigation for  
amazing connectivity &  
entertainment



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Ventilated Front Seats cool you  
down in hot & humid conditions



UVO with 57 smart, connected  
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Points

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Service  
Points



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The Power to Surprise

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: ANDHRA PRADESH: VISAKHAPATNAM: LAKSHMI KIA, BIRLA JUNCTION, PH: 7997815777 ANANTAPUR: MG BROTHERS, PH: 8333929195 BHIMAWARAM: SIMHA, UNDILROAD, PH: 8688836544 GUNTUR: SIMHA, INDIRA AUTONAGAR, PH: 8688836566 KADAPA: HOSHI AUTO, PH: 8688829739 KAKINADA: KANTIPUDI KIA, PH: 7799740208 KURNool: MG BROTHERS, PH: 8500257027 NELLORE: HOSHI AUTO, PH: 8688829729 RAJAHMUNDY: KANTIPUDI KIA, LALACHERUVU, PH: 7799740208 TIRUPATI: HOSHI AUTO, PH: 8688829739 VIJAYAWADA: SIMHA, RAMACHANDRA NAGAR, PH: 8688836501 TELANGANA: HYDERABAD: VIHAAN AUTO VENTURES PVT LTD, SECUNDERABAD, PH: 9738312345, KUKATPALLY, PH: 9394812345, AUTOMOTIVE, HI-TECH CITY, PH: 6309908117, LB NAGAR, NAGOLE, PH: 6309908118, CAR AUTOMOTIVE LLP, JUBILEE HILLS, PH: 7997858880 KHAMMAM: AUTOMOTIVE, PH: 6309908189, MAHBUBNAGAR: AUTOMOTIVE, PH: 6309908110 NALGONDA: AUTOMOTIVE, PH: 6309908183



## OTHER STORIES

## Backwaters flood 14 villages in Kadapa

**Kadapa:** The backwaters of Somasila reservoir has flooded 14 villages in Atluru mandal in Kadapa district. As a result, road transport facilities to the villages have been disrupted. The water level in the reservoir reached 75 TMC feet as against its full capacity of 78 TMC feet on Friday. With the rising Somsila reservoir backwater, 3.5 feet water flowed over the Vemulur bridge, paralyzing traffic to 14 villages in Atluru mandal. Several people had to take a 35-km detour via Badvel to reach Atluru. According to sources, officials are planning to maintain full water capacity in the reservoir.

## Water enters homes in Neelapuram village

**Kadapa:** On Thursday late night water entered the houses in Neelapuram village in Duvvur mandal of Kadapa district. On Friday morning the water level was more than one and a half feet. However, by 6 pm in the evening the water began to recede slightly. The Duvvur pond in the village was already filled with rainwater. With the additional rains, there was no space for the water to flow out resulting in the flooding.

## 34,087 appeared for APEamct-2020

**Kakinada:** As many as 34,087 students appeared for the AP Eamct-2020 examinations on

Friday out of the 42,019. Around 83.10 per cent turnout was registered, and 6,932 students did not attend the exam. The AP Eamct-2020 convener Prof V. Ravindra said that 16,474 students out of 19,987 (82.42 per cent) attended the morning session out of which 3,513 were absent. In the afternoon session 17,613 students attend out of 21,032 (83.74 per cent) and 3,419 were absent.

The Eamct chairman and JNTUK vice-chancellor Prof M. Ramalinga Raju and Mr Ravindra visited the examination centre in Kakinada.

As many as 808 students from Anantapur, 1,041 from Chittoor, 1,481 from East Godavari, 2,028 from Guntur, 971 from Kadapa, 1,654 from Krishna, 904 from Kurnool, 927 from Nellore, 1,048 from Prakasam, 743 from Srikrakulam, 1,852 from Visakhapatnam, 578 from Vizianagaram, 1,233 from West Godavari district and 1,205 students from Hyderabad (Telangana) attended the exam. Mr Ravindra said that the exam-

## RTC runs special buses for candidates

**Kakinada:** The Rajahmundry APSRTC will run 176 special buses for candidates appearing for the Village Secretariat examinations to be held from September 20 to 26.

The buses will start at 5 am from the mandal headquarters.

Meanwhile, RTC officials said that buses coming to Rajahmundry from agency areas like Chintur, Kunavaram, Nellipaka and V.R.Puram are already plying from Friday evening from Kunavaram to Rajahmundry.

The East Godavari District collector D.Muralidhar Reddy said that as many as 1,06,449 candidates for 26 services in village secretariat posts of 1,388 will appear of which 1,877 are disabled candidates. He said that 336 examination centres have been allotted.

Candidates will not be allowed even a minute late. West Godavari District Collector R.Muthyalu Raju said that as many as 74,711 candidates will appear for the village secretariat post examinations in West Godavari District.

He said that all Covid-19 protocols are being followed and Covid-19 patients would be accommodated in isolation rooms to write the exams.

## MP: Lower electricity wheeling charges

**Kurnool:** Rajya Sabha MP T.G. Venkatesh demanded that the electricity wheeling charges be rationalised and brought on par with global tariffs. While globally wheeling charges is just 40 paise per unit, the electricity boards are charging ₹4 while the generation cost of one unit of power is ₹3, he said.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha on Friday, the MP said that industries are closed due to the high wheeling charges in Andhra Pradesh.

He said many coal power projects have closed because of the excessive wheeling charges levied by the electricity boards. Thermal power units in Nellore and Odisha are closed as consumers are not purchasing power due to high rates. About ₹1 lakh crore was invested in these units which have now incurred heavy losses.

## All set to move



RTC employees clean and sanitise a city bus at Governorpet depot in Vijayawada on Friday, ahead of the resumption of services after six months of lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

# AP records 8,096 new Covid cases, 67 deaths

## E. Godavari continues to lead with the highest new cases

### Doctor lost his eye due to infection

From page 1

scale.”

A Kurnool district medical and health officer (DMHO) said that at least six government medical staff died due to Covid-19. One staff nurse, a lab technician, an ophthalmic assistant, a medical educator died. He said the details have been sent to higher authorities about their claim petitions for compensation.

In a statement, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) alleged that the union health minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan's, statement to Lok Sabha had concealed the morbidity and mortality of doctors, nurses and health care workers.

This indifference to the sacrifice of doctors and health care workers is the reality of Covid-19. It appears that they are dispensable.

The IMA further said, “No nation has lost as many doctors and health care workers as India. Doctor mortality is four times the mortality of ordinary citizens and private practitioners is eight times ordinary mortality on the same

Another doctor lost his eye due to the coronavirus infection. The eye was removed as he was diabetic and his lungs had heavy infection, said a doctor. “We are risking our lives serving Covid-19 patients. But the government has not kept its promise of ₹50 lakh compensation,” he said.

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**SHORT TAKES**  
**COVID-19 DEATH TOLL CLOSE TO 85,000-MARK**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
 NEW DELHI, SEPT. 18

With 96,424 fresh cases, India on Friday recorded close to 52.15 lakh cases of Coronavirus. The number of deaths in a day was 1,174 taking the total number of fatalities due to Covid-19 to 84,372, as per Union health ministry figures. However, according to covid-19India.org, the total number of cases had crossed 52.50 lakh by Friday evening and deaths were close to 85,000.

Health ministry officials said India has recorded an "unprecedented high" of single day recoveries after 87,472 persons recovered and discharged in the past 24 hours. The Recovery Rate has reached 78.86% as total recovered cases touched 41.12 lakh. India's Case Fatality Rate (CFR) currently stands at 1.62%.

"India has been consistently reporting a very high level of daily recoveries of more than 70,000 for the past 11 days. Recovered cases are 4.04 times the number of active cases as recoveries outnumber the latter at 30,94,797," they said.

Officials said 90 per cent of the new recoveries are reported from 16 states and UTs. Maharashtra (19,522) contributed 22.31% of the new recoveries while Andhra Pradesh (12.24%), Karnataka (8.3%), Tamil Nadu (6.31%) and Chhattisgarh (6.0%) followed with 32.8% of the new recoveries.

In view of rising cases in the city, Delhi government has announced to continue closure of schools till October 5.

Meanwhile, ministry of health and family welfare has decided to depute a high level Central team to Jammu after a high number of cases were reported from there. Earlier, a special team had visited Srinagar Valley to review Covid management with the district collectors. The current Central team will interact with the district collectors and health officers of Jammu and visit hospitals in Bakhshinagar and Gandhinagar.

# Army admits to killing of three J&K youths

Army finds evidence against its men in Shopian encounter

## 'Action taken must be transparent'

**Srinagar, Sept. 18:** National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Friday said the process of disciplinary action against those found guilty of killing three young men from Rajouri in an alleged fake encounter in Shopian should be transparent.

The families of the three murdered men had continued to proclaim their innocence. Disciplinary action initiated by the army would suggest the army agrees

with the families. The process must remain transparent & the guilty must face the full weight of the law," Omar tweeted.

He was reacting after the Army said it has found "prima facie" evidence that its troops "exceeded" powers under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act during an encounter in Kashmirs' Shopian district in which three men were killed in July this year and has initiated disciplinary proceedings.

— PTI

**ARMY SAID** that 'disciplinary action' is being initiated by it under the Army Act against the officers and soldiers involved in the operation as the inquiry conducted by it "has brought out certain prima facie evidence".

It has said that the slain men's "involvement with terrorism or related activities is under investigation by the J&K police".

According to the families of three labourers Muhammad Iftiaz, Abrar Ahmed Khan and Abrar Yusuf, the trio were killed by the troops in a fake encounter in Shopian's Amshipora area on July 18. A night before, the youths had informed their respective families over the phone that they had reached Shopian where they had been hired by a local fruit grower to work in his apple orchard.

After their killing, the Army had passed them off as "terrorists". Earlier this month, the

allowed to exhume their bodies so that the victims are given a decent burial by them.

Sinha had while speaking to reporters here on September 14 assured that justice would be done with the families of slain youths.

He had said, "The Army is committed to ethical conduct of operations. Further updates on the case will be given periodically without affecting the process of the law of the land".

Last month, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch called for investigation and prosecution into the alleged extrajudicial execution of the three labourers by independent civilian authorities, saying civilian investigations and trials "offer a degree of transparency and independence that is missing from the military justice system".

here on Friday that the inquiry ordered by the Army authorities into Operation Amshipora has been concluded.

He said that since the inquiry has brought out certain prima facie evidence indicating that during the operation, powers vested under the AFSPA 1990 were exceeded and the Do's and Don'ts of the Army Chief as approved by the Supreme Court were contravened, the competent disciplinary authority has directed to initiate disciplinary proceedings under the Army Act against those found prima-facie answerable.

He added, "The evidence collected by the inquiry has prima facie indicated that the three unidentified terrorists killed in Operation Amshipora were Muhammad Iftiaz, Abrar Ahmed Khan and Abrar Yusuf, who hailed from Rajouri. Their DNA report is awaited. Their involvement with terrorism or related activities is under investigation by the police."

He said, "Indian Army is committed to ethical conduct of operations. Further updates on the case will be given periodically without affecting the process of the law of the land".

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# Chinese intel mounts pressure on Muivah

MANOJ ANAND | DC  
 GUWAHATI, SEPT. 18

his stand and started raising some of the irrelevant issues about the interlocutor.

Asserting that the ministry of home affairs had such inputs of China trying to create problems in the northeast, security sources claimed that Chinese agencies have been working in the northeast to rope in rebel leaders to create "internal" unrest and delay the ongoing peace-process in the region.

Disclosing that Chinese Intelligence agencies wanted NSCN (I-M) general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah to delay the settlement of ongoing Naga peace talks, authoritative security sources told this newspaper that the Union government had prior input about the ongoing attempt of China.

Claiming that intelligence inputs were corroborated with NSCN (I-M) general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah in the ongoing informal talks but differences among the rank and file of the NSCN (I-M) was quite visible as its chairman Q. Tuccu and his team has been living at a separate location in New Delhi. However, the Centre has facilitated accommodation for both the chairman and the general secretary at one place.

holders of Nagaland including NNPGs have said their discussion with the Centre has concluded and the "agreed position" has been signed.

The Forum for Naga Reconciliation, which is leading the voice for reconciliation between NSCN (I-M) and NNPG, are also saying that it is time for these two Naga political groups to meet and take forward the unfinished task of reconciliation.

Meanwhile, NSCN (I-M) chairman Q. Tuccu, vice president Tongmeth Wangnao and 13 others have also reached New Delhi to join general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah in the ongoing informal talks but differences among the rank and file of the NSCN (I-M) was quite visible as its chairman Q. Tuccu and his team has been living at a separate location in New Delhi. However, the Centre has facilitated accommodation for both the chairman and the general secretary at one place.

## Farm Bills are protection shield, Oppn misleading farmers: PM

New Delhi, Sept. 18:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday stoutly defended farm sector reform bills, asserting that they will act as a "protection shield" for farmers and accused those opposing the measures of standing with middlemen and "deceiving" and "lying" to peasants.

With Opposition parties dubbing three bills, passed by Lok Sabha and now to be tabled in Rajya Sabha, as "anti-farmers" and the BJP ally SAD quitting his government to protest them, Modi refuted their criticism, and said these laws will unshackle farmers by allowing them to sell their produce anywhere by negotiating a better price.

He asserted that the government purchase of farm produce will remain, adding that the mechanism of minimum support price will continue in

the same way it always has.

At a virtual event to launch several rail projects in Bihar, Modi said his government is committed to providing farmers appropriate price through the MSP, and asserted that no government has done as much for the farming community as the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in its six years in power since 2014.

— PTI

# WORLD

**SHORT TAKES**  
**POLISH PARLIAMENT PASSES ANIMAL RIGHTS LAW**

**Warsaw, Sept. 18:** Poland's Parliament on Friday passed an animal rights law that had angered fur farmers and kosher meat producers and divided the country's right-wing governing alliance.

The junior partners in the three-party ruling coalition had refused to vote in favour, provoking the ire of Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the powerful leader of the Law and Justice (PiS) ruling party that put forward the legislation.

Kaczynski, who is known for his love of cats, has threatened to exclude his coalition partners from the government during a planned Cabinet shuffle or even call snap elections.

## PIO JUDGE TURNS DOWN H1-B PLEA OF INDIANS

**Washington, Sept. 18:** An Indian-American federal judge has turned down an appeal by 169 Indian citizens who had challenged the proclamation of President Donald Trump that barred foreign nationals on H-1B specialty occupation visa from entering the US till the end of the year. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

US District Judge Amit P. Mehta of US District Court for the District of Columbia in its order on Wednesday said that Indian citizens, who are now trapped abroad during trips to India when borders closed, are unlikely to win their case contesting the travel ban proclamation of Trump.

The 169 Indian nationals in their lawsuit had sought an order directing the Secretary of State and the United States consulates "to process, adjudicate, and render final decisions on Plaintiffs' DS-160 visa applications. But requiring such swift processing would be an exercise in futility when the complainant would remain ineligible to enter the country until January 1, 2021, at the earliest," Mehta said.

# China flies 18 warplanes during US, Taiwan talks

Unusually large show of force in response to US envoy's visit



Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu, meets with U.S. Undersecretary of State Keith Krach in Taipei, Taiwan on Friday.

**IN RESPONSE TO** Krach's visit, the Eastern Theater Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army held combat exercises near the Taiwan Strait, at least the second round of war games this month aimed at intimidating supporters of the island's independent political identity.

"This is a legitimate and necessary action taken in response to the current situation across the Taiwan Straits to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity," said China's defense ministry spokesman Ren Guoqiang. In a brief message on its microblog, the Eastern Theater Command said the exercises involved naval and air force units in the Taiwan Strait aimed at gauging their ability to carry out joint operations.

China on Thursday condemned Krach's visit and warned it could retaliate. It views Taiwan as part of its own territory and strongly opposes any type of formal interaction between other countries and the self-ruled island

lunch Wednesday with Taiwan's top official in New York, in a meeting she called historic.

On Saturday, the last day of his visit, Krach will also attend a memorial service for former President Lee Teng-hui, who led the island's transition to democracy and died at age 97 in July. Tensions between Washington and Beijing have already reached high levels as the governments spar over the coronavirus pandemic, trade, technology, Hong Kong and the South China Sea.

The frequency of Chinese exercises near Taiwan recalls the last major crisis between them in 1995-96, when China fired missiles near the island and held war games in a bid to intimidate voters in Taiwan's first direct presidential election.

Those actions were largely seen to have backfired. Taiwan said Chinese warplanes entered its airspace over two days last week during large-scale war

games that it called a "serious provocation to Taiwan and a grave threat to regional peace and stability."

Such actions by the PLA threaten the entire region, it said, calling on the international community to respond. China has increasingly relied on military threats and diplomatic isolation to pressure Taiwan.

That follows the apparent failure of its efforts to win over the island's 23 million people to the prospect of political unification under the "one country, two systems" framework in place in China, with a large majority of Taiwanese favoring maintaining the status quo of de facto independence.

China cut contacts with Taiwan's government following Tsai's 2016 election. She was reelected by a large margin this year while her Democratic Progressive Party maintained its majority in the legislature.

— AP

## FBI chief warns Russia actively targeting Biden

Washington, Sept. 18:

FBI Director Christopher Wray on Thursday warned that Russia is interfering in the 2020 US presidential elections with a steady stream of misinformation aimed at Democrat Joe Biden as well as sapping Americans' confidence in the election process.

Moscow is also attempting to undercut what it sees as an anti-Russian US establishment, Wray told the Democratic-led House of Representatives' Homeland Security committee.

He said his biggest concern is a "steady drumbeat of misinformation" that he said he feared could undermine confidence in the result of the 2020 election.

Wray did not dispute that antifa activists were a serious concern, saying that antifa was a "real thing" and that the FBI had undertaken "any number of properly predicated investigations into what we would describe as violent anarchist extremists," including into individuals who identify with antifa.

— Reuters/AP



## TRUMP ENVOY WARNS UK OVER HARD BORDER

Washington, Sept. 18:

US president Donald Trump's special envoy to Northern Ireland, Mick Mulvaney, has warned against creating a "hard border" by accident" on the island of Ireland.

British prime minister Boris Johnson is proposing new legislation that would break the Northern Ireland protocol of the Brexit divorce treaty that seeks to avoid a physical customs border between Northern Ireland and the Republic.

"The Trump administration, State Department and the US Congress would all be aligned in the desire to see the Good Friday Agreement preserved to see the lack of a border maintained," Mr Mulvaney said. — Agencies

## US bans WeChat, TikTok citing risk

Washington, Sept. 18:

The US will ban the use of WeChat Sunday to "safe-guard the national security of the United States."

The Chinese app TikTok will also be banned by Nov. 12, but Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said on early Friday on CNBC that access to that app may be possible if certain safeguards are in place.

"At the President's direction, we have taken significant action to combat China's malicious collection of American citizens' personal data, while promoting our national values, democratic rules-based norms, and aggres-

sive enforcement of US laws and regulations," Ross said in a prepared statement.

The government said its order, previously announced by Trump in August, will "combat China's malicious collection of American citizens' personal data."

The government previously said that using and downloading the app to communicate won't be a banned transaction, although messaging on the app "could be directly or indirectly impaired" by the ban, and people who use it for messaging won't be subject to penalties.

## GLOBAL COVID-19 CASES TOP 30 MN

London, Sept. 18: Confirmed cases of the Coronavirus have topped 30 million worldwide, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally.

The worldwide count of known Covid-19 infections climbed past 30 million on Thursday, with more than half of them from just three countries: the U.S., India and Brazil, according to the tally kept by Johns Hopkins researchers. The number increased by 10 million in just over a month; global cases passed 20 million on August 22. — AP

## SHORT TAKES

**Hari goes down, stays in 5th place**

**Chennai:** Indian Grandmaster P. Harikrishna maintained his joint fifth place in the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament even as American Wesley So climbed to the top spot ahead of world champion Magnus Carlsen.

Competing in the last three rounds of the Rapid event, Harikrishna started well with a win over American player Jeffery Xiong in 66 moves. After a draw against another US player Hikaru Nakamura, the India number was outlasted by So in 69 moves on Thursday. The win allowed So to take the lead after nine rounds of the Rapid competition with two days of Blitz events to come. After a bright start to his campaign with two victories on the opening day, Harikrishna could manage only one more win in his other six games. — PTI

**Injured Osaka out of French Open**

**Paris:** US Open champion Naomi Osaka has pulled out of the French Open because of an injured left hamstring. Osaka joins defending champion Ash Barty in skipping the French Open, which opens on September 27 in Paris.

In another blow to the clay Grand Slam, tournament organisers announced a further reduction in crowd sizes, because of France's worsening coronavirus epidemic.

The new limit is 5,000 spectators per day, organisers said in a statement late Thursday. They'd previously been planning for 11,500 spectators, split among three sites at Roland Garros. It is important for the sporting, social and economic life of the country that a major event like Roland-Garros can be put on while respecting health imperatives, organisers said. — AP

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# CLASH OF TITANS

**Dhoni fresh and determined as IPL begins today**



Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (left) and Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma in this file photo.

## NUMBERS GAME – MI vs CSK

### HEAD TO HEAD

- OVERALL:
- Matches: 28
- Mumbai Indians won: 17
- Chennai Super Kings won: 11

### MEETING IN 2019

- Mumbai Indians defeated Chennai Super Kings by 37 runs at Mumbai (League)
- Mumbai Indians beat Chennai Super Kings by 46 runs at Chennai (League)
- Mumbai Indians beat Chennai Super Kings by 6 wickets at Chennai (Qualifier 1)

### Mumbai Indian beat Chennai Super Kings by one run at Hyderabad (final)

#### FOR THE RECORD

- Rohit Sharma who scored 4898 runs at an average of 31.60 in 183 innings of 188 matches for Deccan Chargers and Mumbai Indians is the third highest scorer in IPL behind Virat Kohli (5,412 runs in 177 matches) and Suresh Raina (5,368 runs in 193 matches).
- Dwayne Bravo who claimed 147 wickets in 131 innings of 134 matches, needs just three wickets to become the fifth bowler to take 150 wickets in IPL.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

"...experienced players identify key times and that's why they've done so well in their careers. They can turn games, absorb pressure or just sum out the situation. That's what experience is about and that's why we value it so highly. And that's why we've been able to get over the line in so many close games because the key player has been one with a

lot of experience," the CSK coach Fleming further said.

### BRETT BETS ON CSK

Former Australian speedster Brett Lee has tipped three-time champions Chennai Super Kings to win the 13th IPL, saying

the variety in their spin department gives them an advantage in the UAE conditions.

"They (CSK) are up there. I have picked them to win and I think CSK have a good chance because of their spin attack. With Santner,

Jadeja needs to step up and be the No.1 spinner and CSK have got great variety and none of the spinners are same, so they are at an edge for the conditions in the UAE as the tournament progresses," Lee said on Star Sports' show *Game Plan*. — PTI



Armand Duplantis of Sweden clears 6.15 metres to set a new men's pole vault world record during the IAAF Diamond League competition in Rome on Thursday. — AFP

## CAPITALS TO HONOUR COVID WARRIOR

New Delhi, Sept. 18: IPL team Delhi Capitals on Friday said its players will don jerseys bearing the message "Thank You Covid Warriors" during the entire tournament in UAE, calling the initiative a "small token of gratitude" towards the frontline workers fighting the pandemic.

Delhi Capitals' senior Indian pacer Ishant Sharma, spinner Amit Mishra and Mohammad Kaif interacted with a few frontline workers, including doctors and police officers, in a virtual meet apart from sending them personalised team jerseys under the 'Salaam Dilli' initiative.

"To all the sanitation workers, doctors, security forces, blood donors, social workers, drivers, and their respective families — this small token of thanks from our team is testament of your service towards humanity," Ishant said.

The workers honoured by the franchise included those who distributed home-made masks for free, installed mask-vending machines in public places, donated personal savings to buy air tickets for migrant workers and ran a plasma donation network.

Amit Mishra said, "Words are not enough to thank these Covid warriors. As our world continues to battle and survive this pandemic, it's efforts like yours that will continue to inspire, and make a difference." — PTI

Ukrainian Bubka broke the world record on 17 occasions in the 1980s and 1990s, famously edging the mark up by one centimetre on no fewer than nine occasions between 1988 and 1994 so he could collect a bonus each time.

Duplantis was a child prodigy who broke age-group records on his way to joining the pole vaulting elite. He chose to compete internationally for Sweden, his mother's home country. He won the silver medal at last year's world championships.

Born and raised in Louisiana, Duplantis is a photogenic new star in a sport searching for star quality since the retirement of Jamaican sprint legend Usain Bolt in 2017.

His exuberant celebrations and looks straight out of a romantic film mean he fits the bill. — AFP

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