



[Home](#) [India](#) [World](#) [Cities](#) [Opinion](#) [T20 WC](#)

Follow Us:



The Indian EXPRESS

[Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Videos](#) [Explained](#) [Audio](#)

Thursday, September 11, 2020
[Subscribe](#) [Sign in](#)

[Home](#) / [India](#) / As September Covid-19 surge sweeps rural Maharashtra, hunt for beds

As September Covid-19 surge sweeps rural Maharashtra, hunt for beds

As the lockdown lifts, the graph has been rising, and now, at 4.02 lakh cases, Maharashtra rural regions make up 34.4% of its numbers.

Written by [Tabassum Barnagarwala](#) | Satara |

Updated: September 24, 2020 10:29:59 am





Kashabha kumbhar waited three days for bed outside Karad sub district hospital. (Express photo by Tabassum)

For three days earlier this month, 65-year-old Kashabha Kumbhar lay outside the Karad Sub-District Hospital as his family, which had made its way there from a village 20 km away, hunted for a hospital bed. It was only when Kumbhar turned critical that the hospital admitted him on September 10.

The Karad hospital had been converted into a Covid facility in March, but as cases lagged, had gone back to taking in other patients. Now, as [coronavirus](#) spreads to rural areas, hospitals like Karad's in Maharashtra are struggling. Again declared Covid-only this month, the Sub-District Hospital has 45 beds and none in ICU due to the lack of an intensivist and oxygen tank.

Accounting for 54% of the state's 11.23 crore population, rural Maharashtra had only 16.5% of its coronavirus cases till mid-July.

X

As the lockdown lifts, the graph has been rising, and now, at 4.02 lakh cases, Maharashtra rural regions make up 34.4% of its numbers.

Since September 1, Satara has recorded 16,000 cases, with Karad the epicentre. Says Karad Sub-District Hospital's Medical Superintendent Dr Sheela Khairmede: "We did not expect cases to rise so suddenly."



new cases this month, 46% of them have been recorded in Maharashtra alone. With Mumbai being the initial epicentre, the efforts were focused on the capital. As rural areas take a hit, the system is straining.

Entertainment Lifestyle Health Video Explained Audio
SUBSCRIBE
Epaper Sign in



Patients complain of lack of cleanliness in Osmanabad civil hospital. (Express photo by Tabassum)

Satara saw its surge around mid-August, and its total numbers now stand at 30,037, half of them in Karad alone. The district has 471 ICU beds and 1,154 oxygen beds for over 8,700 active cases, including in 22 private hospitals converted into dedicated Covid facilities.

X

“We desperately need more private hospitals to participate,” says Civil Surgeon Dr Subhash Chauhan, while talking about plans for a 300-bed “jumbo facility” with a 20 kilo-litre oxygen tank.

Read Part II of this Express series | [Low pay and long hours, doctors battle more than just Covid-19](#)



Civil Hospital has seven such beds. “We need one more dialysis unit,” Chaudhari says.

SUBSCRIBE
Epaper Sign in

“I get multiple calls a day for beds, my own relative is currently looking for one,” says corporator Vijay Wategaonkar, from regional party Lokseva Aghadi.

Dr Nagnath Dharamadhikari, in-charge of Covid at the Karad Sub-District Hospital, says, “Patients come gasping, but I can’t remove one patient from oxygen to help another.”



Poonam’s family put her on oxygen support at home after five hospitals refused admission. (Express photo by Tabassum)

Locals in Satara have pooled in funds to buy at least 80 oxygen concentrators for patients unable to get a hospital bed. One of them is Poonam Badwe (29), who has Down Syndrome and was diagnosed with Covid-19 on September 7. The family says it couldn’t get a bed in five hospitals, even as Poonam’s oxygen saturation levels dropped below 50%. On September 8, the family reached out for help through WhatsApp, and locals arranged an oxygen cylinder at home.

Kumbhar had come negative in a Rapid Antigen test. While norms mandate a symptomatic person to be re-tested through RT-PCR, there was no follow-through by the government hospital. It was when his condition worsened that his son got



Hambirao Yadav's son Satish too made rounds first of hospitals in Karad and then Satara, after Hambirao contracted Covid-19 last week. Satish finally took his father, the sarpanch of Yeravale village, to Pune Military Hospital, 160 km away.

Satara Collector Shekhar Singh says the district will increase 1,000 isolation beds in the next few days. "Every week we are adding more private hospitals."



Shashikala Todkar made her van her home as she waited for a bed outside karad sub district hospital. (Express photo by Tabassum)

In Osmanabad district, locals raised Rs 1 crore to set up an RT-PCR laboratory back in April. The district was in green zone — meaning no or few cases — from March till May, during which, a senior district official says, only Covid Care Centres for mildly ill patients were set up. Since August 1, the district has recorded 8,955 cases, 89% of its total, which is when the scaling up of beds began. "Cases suddenly rose from July end," says district health officer Dr H V Wadgave.

X

Osmanabad now has 1,010 oxygen beds, and plans to add 580 more. However, it did not plan for oxygen storage tanks, or ambulance demand (with a population of 16.6 lakh, it has 19 ambulances for Covid-19 cases).

Every day, the District Civil Hospital makes frantic calls to dealers for oxygen cylinders. Its requirement for oxygen is expected to increase from 300 to 550



Wadgave says a plan to install oxygen tanks in two government hospitals is waiting for approval.

[SUBSCRIBE](#)
[Epaper](#) [Sign in](#)

Osmanabad Collector Kaustubh Diwegaonkar says they are trying to ramp up testing. “In 60 villages which contribute to 35-40% of the burden, we are using primary health centres for early identification. We are also increasing the number of ambulances.”



A toilet in Osmanabad civil hospital. (Express photo by Tabassum)

X

The problems the pandemic has brought forth further expose the gaps in Maharashtra's health infrastructure. A 2019 Union Health Ministry report, released months before the first coronavirus case in the state, pointed to a 20% shortfall in PHCs and 37% in community health centres in rural areas. The state's allocation for health has been stuck at around 4% of its expenditure for the past two budgets — lower than the national average.



Delhi: Property dealer found dead with bullet injury on head in Chhattarpur

[Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Videos](#) [Explained](#) [Audio](#)
Smog cover over Delhi-NCR; air quality severe amid unhelpful meteorological conditions

SUBSCRIBE

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

[Epaper](#) [Sign in](#)

Coronavirus Explained

[Great Resignation: Why many in the West are quitting their jobs](#)

[Who is Puneet Dikshit, the McKinsey partner charged with insider trading?](#)

[How NASA's DART mission will hit and deflect an asteroid](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

Public health expert Ravi Duggal says that at Rs 1,400 per capita, the expenditure on health in Maharashtra is among the lowest in India (the national average is Rs 1,800-1,900 per capita). In rural areas, he adds, almost 70-80% of the budget goes into just paying salaries.



Subscribe to receive the day's headlines from The Indian Express straight in your inbox

[Subscribe](#)

 ***The Indian Express is now on Telegram. Click [here to join our channel \(@indianexpress\)](#) and stay updated with the latest headlines***

X

For all the latest [India News](#), download [Indian Express App](#).

NewsGuard



The Indian Express website has been rated GREEN for its credibility and trustworthiness by NewsGuard, a global service that rates news sources for their journalistic standards.

TAGS: [Coronavirus](#) [COVID-19](#) [Maharashtra](#)



The health of a baby depends on the health of its mother

Akshaya Patra | Sponsored

Online Master's Degree in Data Science

Great Learning | Sponsored

Enrol now for MBA degree from Top International Universities

upGrad Education | Sponsored

Master AI & ML Without Quitting Your Job

Great Learning | Sponsored

Puducherry: Man, 7-year-old son killed as countrymade firecrackers explode

IndianExpress

Amitabh Bachchan shares a glimpse of Diwali celebrations with Abhishek, Aishwarya, Shweta, Navya

IndianExpress

X

Book a free online Piano class for ages 6-18.

WhiteHat Jr | Sponsored

Kangana Ranaut shares old video where she ignores Karan Johar at an awards show: 'My attitude was always like this'



[Home](#) [India](#) [World](#) [Cities](#) [Opinion](#) [T20 WC](#)

Hrithik Roshan snares epic family pic on Diwali, ex-wife Sussanne Khan celebrates festival with sons Hrehaan and Hridhaan

[Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Videos](#) [Explained](#) [Audio](#)

IndianExpress

SUBSCRIBE

[Epaper](#) [Sign in](#)

Get LLM in Intellectual Property Rights at INR.9,480/month*

Powered by Upgrad | Sponsored

Bengaluru: Kannada actor Puneeth Rajkumar's doctor gets police protection

IndianExpress

Annaatthe movie review: Is this the Rajinikanth film we deserve?

IndianExpress

Study at your dream UK or Ireland University

Fateh Education | Sponsored

Palak Tiwari grooves with mother Shweta Tiwari on her song Bijlee, fans ask if they are sisters

IndianExpress

Who is the Telangana engineer arrested for threats to Virat Kohli's daughter?

IndianExpress

Book a FREE Coding Class For Kids In Grades 1-9

CampK12 | Sponsored

X



[Home](#) [India](#) [World](#) [Cities](#) [Opinion](#) [T20 WC](#)

IndianExpress

[Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Videos](#) [Explained](#) [Audio](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#)
[Epaper](#) [Sign in](#)

Facing hair thinning issues? Here's what you can do to remedy the problem

IndianExpress

Born between 1975-1990? Check eligibility for 2Cr Term Plan

New Max Life Term Plan | Sponsored

ADVERTISEMENT

X

LIVE BLOG



Bengaluru

30 mins ago

Entertainment Lifestyle Tech Videos Explained Audio

SUBSCRIBE

Epaper Sign in

Chennai Tamil Nadu Rains Live Updates: 14 dead; Chennai airport suspends arrivals till 6 pm, departures to continue

2 hours ago

Delhi news live updates: Smog layer covers Delhi-NCR with severe air quality

3 hours ago

Entertainment news Live Updates: Patralekhaa's sister shares hilarious video as actor's wedding speculation continues

3 hours ago



BEST OF EXPRESS



Cities

Tamil Nadu rains:
Chennai airport
suspends arrival ops till
6 pm



Cities

Punjab Assembly
passes resolution
against Centre's BSF
order



Entertainment

Ranbir Kapoor's
Rockstar turns 10:
Imtiaz Ali called his
hero a 'stupid guy', the

film is as pointless



Entertainment

Meenakshi
Sundareshwar is an
inauthentic,
stereotypical take on

Tamil culture. So, what's new?

X



Netflix account

Wayne Carmon
accuses Ryan Reynolds
of using his mom's

[Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Videos](#) [Explained](#) [Audio](#)

SUBSCRIBE

[Epaper](#) [Sign in](#)



livestream

Trending

'Well, that was a
bedtime fail': New
Zealand PM's daughter
crashes Facebook



Sports

Pakistan versus
Australia semifinal:
Clash of teams with
turnaround stories



Sports

Pakistan likely to retain
playing XI; Rizwan,
Malik to be included
despite 'mild flu'



Opinion

Kohli and Bavuma have
stood up for what
counts



Great Resignation: Why
many are quitting their
jobs



Lifestyle

We just can't enough of
Kid Cudi's wedding-
inspired look at CFDA
Awards 2021



Technology

Realme GT Neo 2
review: Aims to stand
out

X

ADVERTISEMENT



MUST READ



Sports
Pakistan versus
Australia semifinal:
Clash of teams with
turnaround stories



Sports
Pakistan likely to retain
playing XI; Rizwan,
Malik to be included
despite 'mild flu'



Sports
Mitchell learns to rock
as Kiwis pull off heist,
enter T20 World Cup
final



Technology

Realme GT Neo 2
review: Aims to stand
out



Technology

Google's Project Relate
to ease communication
for people with speech
impairments



Technology

Lost your iPhone?
Here's why your Apple
ID could also be at risk



Lifestyle

We just can't enough of
Kid Cudi's wedding-
inspired look at CFDA
Awards 2021

ADVERTISEMENT



BUZZING NOW



Trending
'One last heist...':
Dwayne Johnson
accuses Ryan Reynolds
of using his mom's

Netflix account



Trending
'Well, that was a
bedtime fail': New
Zealand PM's daughter
crashes Facebook

livestream



Trending
Watch: Biker crashes
into clothing store after
'brakes fail', customers
escape unscathed

Trending

X



reunited with mother

Entertainment Lifestyle Tech Videos Explained Audio



Trending

'Real hero': Pastor tackles man waving gun during church service, pins him to the ground

SUBSCRIBE

Epaper

Sign in

NOV 11: LATEST NEWS

The Indian EXPRESS

Haryana withholds Rs 1.5 crore award money of Para Asian Games silver medallist after controversy over

residential proof



SC verdict on Ayodhya became right judgment only because both sides accepted it: Chidambaram



Dawood aide, accused in several cases: Not first brush with controversy for Riyaz Bhati



Amid DAP shortage, govt lists out priority districts that will get immediate supply of the fertilizer



Bombay HC sets aside single bench order restraining sale, circulation of Vijaypat Singhania's

autobiography



Dalai Lama: China's leaders 'don't understand variety of cultures'



Taíno people want to stop Christie's sale of artifacts



[Home](#) [India](#) [World](#) [Cities](#) [Opinion](#) [T20 WC](#)



24 hours

[Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Videos](#) [Explained](#) [Audio](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

[Epaper](#) [Sign in](#)



Meet Asser Malik:
Nobel laureate Malala's
husband and Pakistan
cricket official



Explained: Escalation of
Ethiopia's Tigray crisis
and its implications

ADVERTISEMENT

X

TRENDING NEWS



[Home](#) [India](#) [World](#) [Cities](#) [Opinion](#) [T20 WC](#)

[Covid Vaccine Slot Availability](#)

[Mucormycosis](#)

[Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Videos](#) [Explained](#) [Audio](#)
[Jio Recharge Plans](#) [Airtel Recharge Plans](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

[Epaper](#) [Sign in](#)

[VI Recharge Plans](#)

[Art & Craft Classes For Kids](#)

[Fitness Classes For Kids](#)

[Dance Classes For Kids](#)

[Delhi News Live](#)

FOLLOW US



DOWNLOAD APPS



The Indian Express website has been rated GREEN for its credibility and trustworthiness by Newsguard, a global service that rates news sources for their journalistic standards.

EXPRESS GROUP

[The Indian Express](#)

[ieTamil.com](#)

[The Financial Express](#)

[ieBangla.com](#)

[Loksatta](#)

[ieMalayalam.com](#)

[Jansatta](#)

[inUth](#)

[The ExpressGroup](#)

[MyInsuranceClub](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[26/11 Stories of Strength](#)

[Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards](#)

[Online Classes for Kids](#)

[Light House Journalism](#)

QUICK LINKS

[T&C](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Advertise with Us](#)

[Brand Solutions](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Statutory provisions on reporting \(sexual offenses\)](#)

[This website follows the DNPA's code of conduct](#)

X