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SCO heads condemn Pahalgam terrorist attack

Declaration signed and adopted by all members; it called for an end to the 'cross-border movement' of terrorists

They expressed their opposition to 'unilateral coercive measures, including those of an economic nature'

India joined nations in the grouping to condemn the strikes by Israel and the U.S. against Iran, a member state, in June

By Anusha P. Venkatesh

TIANJIN

The 10-member Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on Monday "strongly condemned" terrorism in all its forms and called upon leaders to "adhere to fairness and justice" while opposing "cold war mentality".

The Tianjin Declaration, signed and adopted by all members, including India, Pakistan, and Russia, called for an end to "cross-border movement" of terrorists. The declaration reaffirmed the bloc's "firm commitment to fight against terrorism, separatism, and extremism" and stressed the inadmissibility of attempts to use terrorism, separatism, and extremism as a "pretext for 'mercenary purposes'".

The member states also opposed "unilateral coercive measures, including those of an economic nature", that contravene the United Nations charter and principles of the World Trade Organization, in a possible reference to the

U.S. tariffs.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, who chaired the meeting of the heads of the member states, in his opening remarks, criticised the "balancing act" of terrorism by some countries as "unacceptable, as he spoke at the summit of the heads of state of the SCO on Monday.

"The shadows of Cold War mentality, bullying, are not disappearing, and there are new challenges that are increasing, not diminishing," said Mr. Xi, who has often used the term "cold war mentality" to refer to the uncertainty over the U.S. tariffs.

'SCO plus' meeting

The declaration at the summit, which focused on the "Global South and global uncertainties in trade and a fluid and chaotic global situation", opened by state leaders, also emphasised the need for "profound historical changes that affect all economic and social relations".

Mr. Xi, who chaired the

Oppose terrorism: PM at SCO summit

TIANJIN Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked whether "open support" of terrorism by some countries was acceptable, as he spoke at the summit of the heads of state of the SCO on Monday. Addressing the meeting, chaired by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Mr. Modi said the 'S' in SCO should also stand for security, and mentioned the April 22 Pakistan terror attack that killed 26 Indians. "We must jointly oppose terrorism in all its forms and colours. This is our duty towards humanity," he said. ■ PAGE 5

'SCO plus' meeting on Monday afternoon, proposed a global governance initiative (GGI), calling on countries to work in concert for a more just and equitable global governance system adhering to sovereign equality, abiding by international rule of law, practicing multilateralism, advocating the people-centered approach,

and focusing on taking real actions. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, briefing the press on Monday night, said the SCO encourages all countries to dialogue partner and co-operation to a single partner status. Mr. Wang said that Laos has been accepted as a partner country of the SCO, taking the total strength of the grouping to

27 with 10 members and 17 partners. Secretary-General of the SCO, Nurkan Yeskenbayev, said at the briefing that an agreement was made at the summit to establish an SCO development bank, a long-term ambition of Beijing.

Taking note of Israel's ongoing war on Gaza and the catastrophic humanitarian situation engulfing the "Gaza strip", all the member states expressed "deep concern" and strongly condemned "actions that have led to numerous casualties among the civilian population" in the enclave.

India joined the members of the grouping to strongly condemn the strikes by Israel and the U.S. against Iran, a member state, in June

INSIDE



Landslip leaves
two dead on the
Kedarnath route

DEHRADUN

A landslip on the Kedarnath route on Monday morning killed two pilgrims and left six injured while heavy rain continued to lash various parts of Uttarakhand. ■ PAGE 6

Indonesian govt. deploys Army in restive Jakarta

JAKARTA

Thousands rallied across Indonesia on Monday as the military was deployed in the capital after six persons were killed in the nationwide protests that were sparked by anger over land rights for low-income. ■ PAGE 14

Elections are the 'only alternative' for Bangladesh

DHAKA

Bangladesh's chief adviser Muhammad Nurul has warned that any deviation from planned elections would be "extremely dangerous" for the country. ■ PAGE 14

Earthquake kills over 800 and injures at least 2,800 in Afghanistan; rescue efforts under way

Agence France-Presse

KABUL

A strong earthquake and multiple aftershocks collapsed houses onto sleeping families in a remote, mountainous region in Afghanistan on Monday, killing more than 800 people and injuring at least 2,800.

A massive rescue operation is underway, according to the Taliban authorities. The 6.0-magnitude earthquake struck just before midnight, rattling buildings from Kabul to the southern city of Kandahar. The epicentre was about 27 km off Jalalabad, the U.S. Geological Survey said.

Destruction swept across at least five provinces and rescuers were still pulling people from destroyed homes and evacuating the injured by helicopter as evening approached.

The search operation is still going on. Many people are stuck under the rubble of their roofs," the disaster management head in eastern Kunar province, Khushal Khan said.

Another 12 people were killed and 355 injured in neighbouring Nangarhar province, while 58 people were injured in northern Kunar's Nurgal district, dozens of residents of the sur-



Rescuing disaster Civil defence workers, local people, and soldiers helping the injured in earthquake-hit Afghanistan. AP

rounding area helped rescuers to pull people from the rubble of flattened homes, sometimes with their bare hands. Many injured were transported to hospitals in Jalalabad city in Nangarhar province.

'Fear and tension' Relatively shallow quakes can cause more damage, especially since the majority of Afghans live in low-rise, mud-brick homes vulnerable to collapse.

He added that many living in quake-hit villages were among the more than four million Afghans who have returned to the country from Iran and Pakistan

in recent years. "They wanted to build their homes here," Nangarhar and Kunar provinces border Pakistan, with the Taliban crossing the site of many waves of Afghan refugees deported or forced to leave, often with no work and nowhere to go.

Pope expresses grief UN chief Antonio Guterres said his condolences to the agricultural department in Nangarhar province.

Will accept claims on SIR until last day of nominations: EC

By Anusha Chakrabarti

NEW DELHI

Even as the deadline for filing claims and objections to the draft electoral rolls of Bihar ended on Monday, the Election Commission said that as per the June 24 special instructions revision (SIR) order, applications would still be accepted till the last date of nomination before the Assembly election.

However, these claims, if accepted, would not make it to the final list to be out on September 30, but would be addressed as separate additions later.

Earlier, in the Supreme Court, which heard pleas for extending the deadline to file claims and objections in the SIR process, the EC submitted it would accept revision forms even after the deadline, and these would be integrated into the final list.

According to the EC data released on Monday, nearly 37,000 applications have been filed for re-inclusion of names.

As per the SIR order, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) has powers to scrutinise all claims and conduct a suo motu inquiry as well as issue notice to any elector to cause the person to be included in the list. The ERO will issue a "speaking order" stating the reasons for the same.

A speaking order is one where the authority explicitly states the reasons behind its decision, linking it to the evidence, facts, and applicable laws. This ensures that the decision is not arbitrary and reflects sound reasoning.

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“Don't waste your time with explanations: people only hear what they want to hear.”

— Paulo Coelho

SCO heads condemn Pahalgam terrorist attack

Declaration signed and adopted by all members; it called for an end to the 'cross-border movement' of terrorists

They expressed their opposition to 'unilateral coercive measures, including those of an economic nature'

India joined nations in the grouping to condemn the strikes by Israel and the U.S. against Iran, a member state, in June

Vighnesh P. Venkitesh
TIANJIN

The 10-member Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on Monday "strongly condemned" terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the Pahalgam attack and the attacks on Jaffer Express and Khuzdar in Pakistan.

The Tianjin Declaration, signed and adopted by all members, including India, Pakistan, and Russia, called for an end to "cross-border movement" of terrorists. The declaration reaffirmed the bloc's "firm commitment to fight against terrorism, separatism, and extremism", and stressed the inadmissibility of attempts to use terrorist, separatist, and extremist groups for "mercenary purposes".

The member states also opposed "unilateral coercive measures, including those of an economic nature", that contravene the United Nations charter and principles of the World Trade Organization, in a possible reference to the

U.S. tariffs.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, who chaired the meeting of the heads of the member states, in his opening remarks, criticised the "bullying behaviour" in the world order and called upon leaders to "adhere to fairness and justice" while opposing "cold war mentality".

"The shadows of Cold War mentality, bullying, are not dissipating, and there are new challenges that are increasing, not diminishing," said Mr. Xi, who has often used the term "cold war mentality" to refer to the uncertainties over the U.S. tariffs.

'SCO plus' meeting

The declaration at the summit, which focused on strengthening the Global South amid global uncertainties in trade and a "fluid and chaotic global situation", opened by stating that the world was undergoing "profound historical changes that affect all spheres of political, socio-economic, and social relations".

Mr. Xi, who chaired the

Oppose terrorism: PM at SCO summit

TIANJIN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked whether "open support" of terrorism by some countries was acceptable, as he spoke at the summit meet of the heads of state of the SCO on Monday. Addressing the meeting chaired by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Mr. Modi said the 'S' in SCO should also stand for security, and mentioned the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 civilians. "We must jointly oppose terrorism in all its forms and colours. This is our duty towards humanity," he said. » PAGE 5

'SCO plus' meeting on Monday afternoon, proposed a Global Governance Initiative (GGI), calling on countries to work in concert for a more just and equitable global governance system adhering to sovereign equality, abiding by international rule of law, practicing multilateralism, advocating the people-centered approach,



Power point: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Tianjin on Monday. ANI

and focusing on taking real actions.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, briefing the press on Monday night, said the SCO encourages all countries to utilise UN mechanisms and multilateral ideals and that global governance should not be attained by unilateral bullying. He also said that Pakistan and Armenia had announced de-

velopment of diplomatic relationship at the summit.

Announcing that the grouping has decided to merge the statuses given to non-member countries – dialogue partner and observer – to a single partner status, Mr. Wang said that Laos has been accepted as a partner country of the SCO, taking the total strength of the grouping to

27 with 10 members and 17 partners.

Secretary-General of the SCO, Nurlan Yermekbayev, said at the briefing that an agreement was made at the summit to establish an SCO development bank, a long-term ambition of Beijing.

Taking note of Israel's ongoing war on Gaza and the catastrophic humani-

Modi touts peace as he meets Putin

TIANJIN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday and stressed the need for a ceasefire in Ukraine. Russian state media reported that the leaders spoke for almost an hour in the vehicle before sitting down for the meeting. "Had an excellent meeting with President Putin... Discussed ways to deepen bilateral cooperation in all sectors," he said in a social media post, adding that the leaders "exchanged views on regional and global developments". » PAGE 5

tarian situation engulfing the Gaza Strip, all the member states expressed "deep concern" and strongly condemned "actions that have led to numerous casualties among the civilian population" in the enclave. India also joined the fellow members of the grouping to strongly condemn the strikes by Israel and the

U.S. against Iran, a member state, in June that targeted Tehran's nuclear facilities.

The declaration also took note of the political situation in Afghanistan. The members reiterated that the formation of an "inclusive government with broad participation of representatives of all ethno-political groups" of the society is the only way to achieve lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. All the member states, except India, also reaffirmed their support for China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Mr. Xi, in his opening remarks, pledged to provide ₹2 billion in grants to member countries within this year, and an additional ₹10 billion in loan to member banks of the SCO Interbank Consortium over the next three years. He also said that the group should set up an "SCO development bank" as soon as possible.

(The writer is in China at an invitation from the China Public Diplomacy Association.)

(With inputs from Suhagini Haider)

1. Condemnation of Terrorism

- The **10-member Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** strongly condemned terrorism in all forms, including the **Pahalgam terror attack** (April 22, killed 6 civilians).
 - Declaration called for an end to the **"cross-border movement of terrorists"**, targeting separatist and extremist groups.
-

2. Tianjin Declaration

- Adopted unanimously by SCO members (India, China, Russia, Pakistan, etc.).
- Reaffirmed bloc's commitment to:
 - Fight terrorism, separatism, extremism.
 - Reject "mercenary purposes" of terror financing.
- Opposed **"unilateral coercive measures"** → implicit reference to **U.S. tariffs on China and Russia**.
- Supported **inclusive government formation in Afghanistan** with participation from all ethnic/political groups.

3. China's Position (Xi Jinping)

- Xi criticized **"bullying behaviour"** in world order → reference to **U.S. sanctions/tariffs**.
 - Called for **fairness and justice** in global governance.
 - Pledged **¥2 billion in grants** to SCO members + **¥10 billion SCO Development Bank fund**.
 - Reaffirmed support for **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** (India did not endorse).
-

4. India's Position (PM Modi)

- Modi emphasized **"S"** in SCO = **Security**, called for united stand against terrorism.
- Mentioned **Pahalgam attack** specifically as an example of cross-border terror.
- Highlighted need for **joint global cooperation** against terrorism in all forms.
- Stressed bilateral peace with **Putin** → discussed **Ukraine ceasefire** and deepening cooperation in energy, trade, defence.



5. Geopolitical Dimensions

U.S. Tariffs & Cold War mentality → China, Russia framed U.S. actions as unilateral bullying.

SCO's position on **Gaza war**: condemned strikes by Israel & U.S. on Iran (a member state).

Expansion of SCO: Pakistan & Armenia elevated diplomatic roles; Laos admitted as a new partner.

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- **SCO Formation:** Established in 2001 (Shanghai), aimed at **security, regional stability, economic cooperation**.
 - **Members:** India, China, Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran.
 - **Observer/Dialogue Partners:** Belarus, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Turkey, etc.
 - **Relevance for India:**
 - Provides platform to raise **terrorism issue** (esp. vis-à-vis Pakistan).
 - Balancing act: India aligns with **Russia, Central Asia** while managing friction with **China & Pakistan**.
 - India has not endorsed **BRI**, citing sovereignty concerns (CPEC through PoK).

- **Expansion of SCO**

- **Laos** admitted as new partner, expanding SCO's global reach.
- SCO encourages **UN mechanisms** for global governance instead of unilateral measures.
- **6. Gaza Crisis and U.S.-Iran Tensions**
- SCO condemned Israeli and U.S. strikes on Iran (a member-state).
- Called for inclusive government in Afghanistan.
- Xi pledged **¥2 billion in grants** and **¥10 billion loan fund** to SCO members.

Earthquake kills over 800 and injures at least 2,800 in Afghanistan; rescue efforts under way

Agence France-Presse
NURGAL

A strong earthquake and multiple aftershocks collapsed homes onto sleeping families in a remote, mountainous region in Afghanistan on Monday, killing more than 800 people and injuring at least 2,800.

A massive rescue operation is underway, according to the Taliban authorities. The 6.0-magnitude earthquake struck just before midnight, rattling buildings from Kabul to neighbouring Pakistan's capital, Islamabad. The epicentre was about 27 km off Jalalabad, the U.S. Geological Survey said.

Destruction swept across at least five provinces and rescuers were still pulling people from destroyed homes and evacuating the injured by helicopter as evening approached.

"The search operation is still going on. Many people are stuck under the rubble of their roofs," the disaster management head in eastern Kunar province, Ehsanullah Ehsan, told AFP, warning the death toll could rise.

Around 800 people were killed and 2,500 injured in Kunar alone, near the epicentre, Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said.

Another 12 people were killed and 255 injured in neighbouring Nangarhar province, while 58 people were injured in Laghman province.

In Wadir village in Kunar's Nurgal district, dozens of residents of the surrounding area helped



Devastating disaster: Civil defence workers, local people, and soldiers helping the injured in earthquake-hit Afghanistan. AP

rounding area helped rescuers to pull people from the rubble of flattened homes, sometimes with their bare hands. Many injured were transported to hospitals in Jalalabad city in Nangarhar province.

'Fear and tension'

Relatively shallow quakes can cause more damage, especially since the majority of Afghans live in low-rise, mud-brick homes vulnerable to collapse.

Some of the most severely impacted villages in Kunar "remain inaccessible due to road blockages", the UN migration agency

warned in a statement to AFP.

Roads remained blocked nearly 20 hours after the earthquake, despite resident efforts to clear the way.

"There is a lot of fear and tension... Children and women were screaming. We had never experienced anything like this in our lives," a member of the agricultural department in Nurgal Ijaz Ulhaq Yaad said.

He added that many living in quake-hit villages were among the more than four million Afghans who have returned to the country from Iran and Pakistan

in recent years. "They wanted to build their homes here."

Nangarhar and Kunar provinces border Pakistan, with the Torkham crossing the site of many waves of Afghan returnees deported or forced to leave, often with no work and nowhere to go.

Pope expresses grief

UN chief Antonio Guterres added his condolences to those shared by the Taliban government and several nations. "I stand in full solidarity with the people of Afghanistan after the devastating earthquake that hit the country earlier to-

day," he said.

In a post shared by the Vatican, Pope Leo XIV said he was "deeply saddened by the significant loss of life caused by the earthquake in the area of eastern Afghanistan".

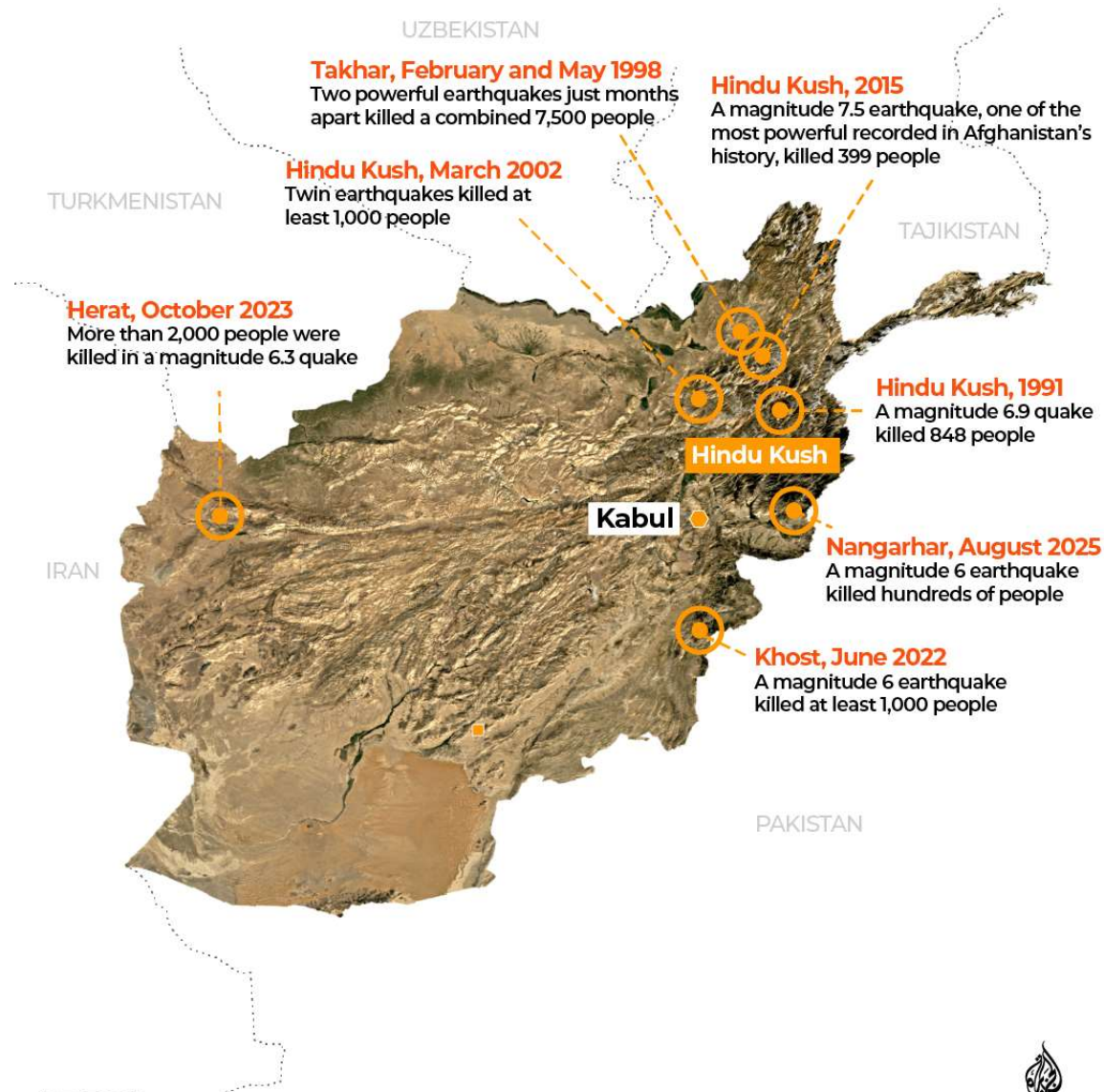
Afghanistan is frequently hit by earthquakes, especially in the Hindu Kush mountain range, near the junction of the Eurasia and India tectonic plates.

Since 1900, there have been 12 earthquakes with magnitudes greater than seven in northeast Afghanistan, according to Brian Baptie, a seismologist at the British Geological Survey.

EARTHQUAKE

Deadly earthquakes in Afghanistan

Afghanistan sits in one of the most seismically active zones on Earth, with the Hindu Kush a hotspot due to powerful surface faults and deep plate movements.



Source: News agencies | September 1, 2025

AFGHANISTAN

Powerful earthquake kills hundreds

At least 1,000 killed and more than 1,500 injured after a huge earthquake hits southeastern Afghanistan.



► The magnitude **5.9** earthquake struck about 44km (27 miles) from the city of Khost, near the Pakistan border, at a depth of 51km (31 miles)



In this photo released by state-run news agency Bakhtar, Afghans look at destruction caused by an earthquake in the province of Paktika, eastern Afghanistan, Wednesday, June 22, 2022. (Bakhtar News Agency via AP)

► At least **1,000** people killed

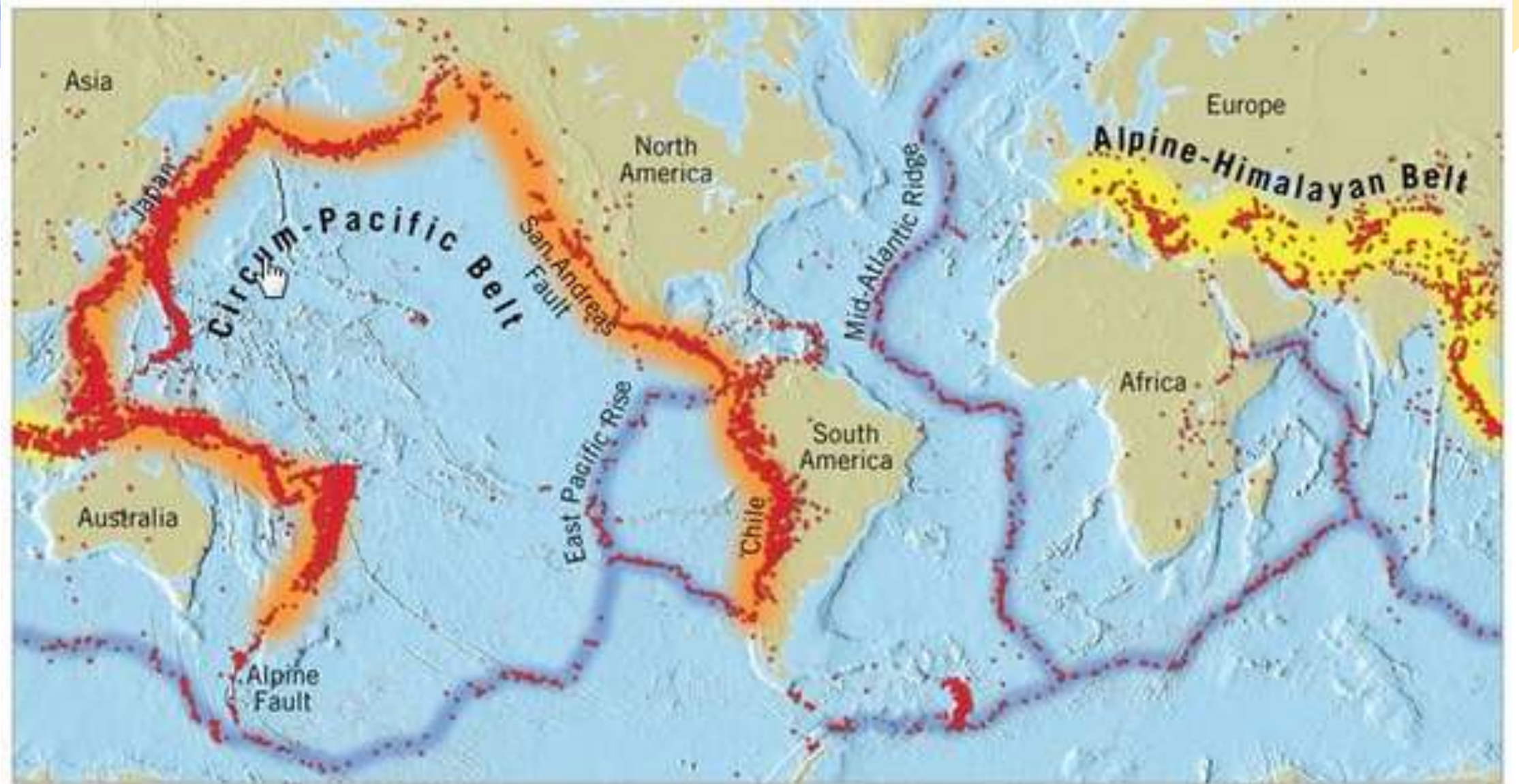
► More than **1,500** people injured



Source: United States Geological Survey (USGS) | June 22, 2022



@AJLabs ALJAZEERA



1. Event Overview

- A **6.0 magnitude earthquake** struck eastern Afghanistan (near Jalalabad, ~27 km away).
 - Time: Shortly before midnight.
 - Casualties:
 - **800+ dead**
 - **2,800+ injured**
 - Widespread destruction across at least **five provinces**.
 - Epicentre tremors also felt in **Pakistan (Islamabad, Kunar, Nangarhar, Laghman)**.
-

2. Humanitarian Impact

- Thousands trapped under rubble; rescue teams engaged in pulling survivors.
- Hospitals in Jalalabad and nearby provinces overwhelmed.
- Families in remote villages severely impacted.
- **Fear & Tension:** Frequent aftershocks made survivors reluctant to return home.

3. Response Measures

- **Taliban administration** coordinating rescue with local defence and volunteers.
 - **Helicopters & local villagers** assisting in evacuation and rubble clearance.
 - **International solidarity:**
 - **UN Chief António Guterres:** Called for global support.
 - **Pope Francis:** Condoled and expressed deep sadness.
 - Vatican, NGOs, and neighbours expected to contribute aid.
-

4. Geographical Context

- Afghanistan lies in the **Hindu Kush mountain range**, near the **Eurasian & Indian tectonic plates junction**.
- Prone to frequent, devastating earthquakes.
- Since 1900: 12 quakes of magnitude >7 recorded in Afghanistan.

-
- **2015 Earthquake:** 7.5 magnitude killed >380 across Afghanistan & Pakistan.
 - **2002 Earthquake:** 1,000+ dead in northern Afghanistan.
 - Afghanistan has **weak infrastructure & high rural poverty**, making quake impact severe.
 - **6. Strategic Concerns**
 - Earthquake adds pressure on already strained Afghan economy under Taliban.
 - Large number of **refugees returning from Pakistan** now face added vulnerabilities.
 - Possibility of **international aid diplomacy** – countries may leverage relief for political ties with Taliban.



- **Disaster Management Act, 2005 (India)** – parallels in institutional framework for quick response.
- **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)** – UN initiative for reducing disaster risk.
- **India's role:** As a neighbour, India may provide humanitarian assistance through initiatives like **Operation Dost** (as in Turkey-Syria 2023 earthquake).
- Earthquake-prone regions: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, and India's Himalayan belt.

SC issues notice over 'denial' of Samagra Shiksha funds to T.N.

Krishnasudhan Balasubramanian
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court decided to step in after Tamil Nadu complained on Monday about having to bear over ₹1,000 crore in reimbursements to private schools for admissions to economically disadvantaged students under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, after the Centre refused to part with its share under the Samagra Shiksha scheme.

A Bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath issued a notice on an appeal by the State against a Madras High Court decision of June 10, which delinked the reimbursements under the RTE Act from the Centre's financial obligation to Tamil Nadu under the scheme. The 2009 Act requires private school managements to admit children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to the extent of 25% of their strength in entry-level classes free of charge. The State is obliged to reimburse the schools.

Doubts raised
The Centre had argued in the High Court that the RTE Act is a central law and issues regarding disbursement of funds under the Samagra Shiksha scheme as Tamil Nadu had refused to implement the National Education Policy (NEP 2020). The State had raised doubts about the three-language policy of NEP 2020 with a provision on Hindi, viewing it as a challenge to regional linguistic diversity.

Appearing for Tamil Nadu, senior advocate P. Wilson submitted that the Centre and State had concurred in responsibility to fund the education of poor and disadvantaged children under Section 7 of the RTE Act, 2009.

"The Madras High Court erred in ruling that only the State is primarily responsible for these expenditures. The Madras High Court had directed the State to bear the entire financial responsibility for the 2025-2026 academic year. It should have also directed the Central government to contribute," Mr. Wilson argued.

Arbitrary move
He said that the Centre's insistence on linking fund disbursement under Samagra Shiksha scheme to compliance with NEP guidelines was arbitrary. The Bench ordered the Centre to respond to the State's petition in four weeks.

Panel to draft education policy for Telangana

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana government has formed a committee for formulation of Telangana Education Policy as a guiding document for Telangana's education policy for 2047, keeping in view the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the state's education needs and aspirations of the State.

A memo was issued by the Education department's secretary, Yogita Reddy, on August 26. The Committee is requested to submit its report by October 30. In terms of reference include studying the provision of the NEP and adapting them to the State's context.

Bird's-eye view

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has formed a committee for formulation of Telangana Education Policy as a guiding document for Telangana's education policy for 2047, keeping in view the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the state's education needs and aspirations of the State.

Funding of Ayyappa meet not decided, Kerala govt. tells HC

The Hindu Bureau
KOCCH

The State government verbally informed the Kerala High Court on Monday that a final decision on the funding and allied aspects of Global Ayyappa Sangamam is yet to be taken, and that only talks were held in this regard.

The petitioner contended that it was intended to use government funds for an event held in the name of religion

There was more of a political event, and also the government's decision to conduct the meet in association with the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) at Pampadum on September 20.

'Beyond duty of govt.'
Mr. Nandakumar said it is the duty of the government to ensure that the event is not a religious event, but a cultural event.

2 more die of 'brain-eating amoeba' infection in Kerala

The toll due to amoebic meningoenzephalitis in the State this year has risen to three; so far, 42 cases have been reported, the infection mainly spreads through contaminated water

The Hindu Bureau
KOTTAYAM

Two more people have died of amoebic meningoenzephalitis in Kerala, bringing the total toll to three.

The deceased included a three-month-old infant, who had been undergoing treatment at the hospital for nearly a month. The infant, who died in Kottayam, was suspected to have contracted the disease from the well water used at home.

The other deceased is a 52-year-old woman from Kottayam district. She started treatment on July 8. She was shifted to the intensive care unit at the MCH, Kottayam, on August 14 at the MCH. Of the 13 still under treatment, eight are at MCH. So far, 42 cases have been reported.

KCR being made a scapegoat: Kavitha

R. Ravikanth Reddy
HYDERABAD

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu (NCH) on Monday charged the previous YSR Congress Party (YCP) regime with exploiting Kavitha Reddy's death to make NCH a scapegoat.

Mr. Kavitha told presspersons that KCR was being made a scapegoat in the controversy. She accused Mr. Harish Rao and Mr. Santosh Rao of a central role in the alleged irregularities.

She also said that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu (NCH) was "protecting" them, and that the YCP regime's support in the KCR case is being shielded, she said.

CM vows to establish Ramarajya in A.P.

N. Umashankar
RAJAMPET

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday charged the previous YSR Congress Party (YCP) regime with exploiting Kavitha Reddy's death to make NCH a scapegoat.

She also said that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu (NCH) was "protecting" them, and that the YCP regime's support in the KCR case is being shielded, she said.

Addressing a public meeting at Rajampet village of Anaparthi district, the Chief Minister reiterated his commitment to rebuild the state and to transform the drought-hit Rayachoti into a "Ramarajya".

With reforms in irrigation, investments, and welfare schemes, we will rebuild Andhra Pradesh into a Ramarajya. With people's support, I can even move mountains if necessary," Mr. Naidu said.

T.N. signs MoUs with 3 German firms for ₹3,200-cr. investment

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government on Monday inked some memoranda of understanding (MoUs) in Germany, including the one with the Munich-based, major engineering firm, Kvaerner.

The company will invest ₹2,000 crore in the establishment of an advanced facility for making railway doors and tanking systems. This will be Kvaerner's first-ever major manufacturing investment in Tamil Nadu. The project is expected to generate jobs for 3,500 people.

Another MoU was signed with Nordex Group, one of the world's leading wind turbine manufacturers. The company will invest ₹1,000 crore in a project that will likely create 2,500 jobs.

The other MoU was signed with Alstom, a company that focuses on power-efficient electric motors and air movement solutions. The company will expand its global capability centre and manufacturing base in the State.

Mr. Naidu also met several leaders of the FDP Group who expressed interest in expansion in Tamil Nadu.



M.R. train at a car museum in Düsseldorf in Germany.

Chief Minister Stalin says the agreements reflected the world's growing confidence in Tamil Nadu

Chief Minister Stalin highlighted Tamil Nadu's dominance in the automotive and electric vehicle sectors and invited BMW to deepen its engagement with India through Tamil Nadu.

Commenting on the MoUs, Mr. Stalin said they reflected the world's growing confidence in our State. In a post on X, he said, "Tamil Nadu moves ahead as a centre of excellence, carrying strength, vision, and the promise of shaping global industry."

HP State president Nalinagar Nagendran said the companies with which the government signed MoUs had been operating in the State for many years. In a post on X, he said the news about the MoUs raised suspicion.

Mr. Nagendran said the total investment of ₹3,200 crore was a major step, given that the State is one of the largest economies in India.

SC upholds Telangana's domicile rule for MBBS seats

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday upheld the Telangana government's domicile rule requiring students to be residents of the State for the four years preceding Class 12 to qualify for admission to medical and dental colleges under the State quota.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and Justice V. Ramaswami allowed the State's appeal and affirmed the constitutionality of the Telangana Medical and Dental College Admission Rules, 2017, as amended in 2024. The impugned rule stipulated that only students who had completed Class 12 in Telangana were eligible for admission under the State quota.

HC judgment
The High Court last year had observed that the rules unfairly excluded students whose parents were permanent residents of the State but who had temporarily studied outside Telangana, often to attend preparatory courses for medical entrance examinations.

However, a Division Bench led by Chief Justice Arundhanii had declined to strike down Rule 3(a) of the 2017 Rules, which prescribed the criteria for local candidates, in its entirety.

While setting aside the High Court's order, the top court noted that in the absence of a statutory definition of residence or a prescribed framework for testing residence certificates, the directions with aptness in an "ancillary situation".



The top court set aside the HC order noting the absence of statutory definition of resident

the "local candidate" quota for MBBS and BDS courses. "The students' writ petitions stand dismissed," the Bench said.

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ISRO seeks proposals from scientific community to study Chandrayaan-3 data

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Monday issued an Announcement of Opportunity (AO) for scientific analysis and utilisation of data from all experiments of Chandrayaan-3 lander and rover.

The Chandrayaan-3 mission achieved historic soft-landing in the southern high latitudes of the moon on August 23, 2023, marking India's first nation to touch down on the polar region of the moon.

To enhance the science outcome of the Chandrayaan-3 mission, ISRO seeks proposals from the scientific community outside ISRO/De-Science to spend money through this AO, towards scientific analysis and utilisation of data from all experiments of Chandrayaan-3 lander and rover.



Later launch will allow researchers to analyse data from the Chandrayaan-3 lander and rover, ISRO said

The Chandrayaan-3 mission achieved historic soft-landing in the southern high latitudes of the moon on August 23, 2023, marking India's first nation to touch down on the polar region of the moon.

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'CBI probe on Kaleshwaram project soon'

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The letter to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) seeking it to investigate into the findings of the Justice P.C. Ghose Commission on the Kaleshwaram Project, will be written in a day or two, Telangana Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said on Monday.

"We are writing to a central agency, not to the CBI. If State agencies were to handle this, accusations of bias would be inevitable," he remarked. The CBI would be asked to look into the biggest infrastructure controversies, the government maintained.

2 more die of 'brain-eating amoeba' infection in Kerala

The toll due to amoebic meningoencephalitis in the State this year has risen to three; so far, 42 cases have been reported; the infection mainly spreads through contaminated water

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

Two more people lost their lives to amoebic meningoencephalitis at the Government Medical College Hospital (MCH) in Kozhikode district of Kerala on Sunday.

The deceased included a three-month-old infant, who had been undergoing treatment at the hospital for nearly a month. The infant, who died is suspected to have contracted the disease from the well water used at home.

The other deceased is Ramla, 52, from Kannamangalam in Malappuram district. She started treatment on July 8. She was



Risky dip: The pond in Kozhikode where the nine-year-old girl who died by the infection is said to have taken bath. K. RAGESH

shifted to the Intensive Care Unit at the MCH. Her condition further worsened on August 26 and she died on Sunday.

The death toll due to amoebic meningoencephalitis in Kerala this year

has now risen to three. A nine-year-old girl had died due to the illness on August 14 at the MCH. Of the 13 still under treatment, eight are at MCH. So far, 42 cases have been reported.

The 'brain-eating amoe-

ba,' enters the human body through the nose from contaminated water, while bathing or swimming. The common symptoms of the infection are fever, headache, nausea and vomiting, experienced within five to 10 days of contracting it.

There are two variants of the infection, primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM) and granulomatous amoebic encephalitis (GAE), the latter being the one reported in Kerala now. The mortality rate is normally 95%.

The Health Department has launched a State-wide drive to ensure the cleanliness of waterbodies through chlorination as a precautionary measure.

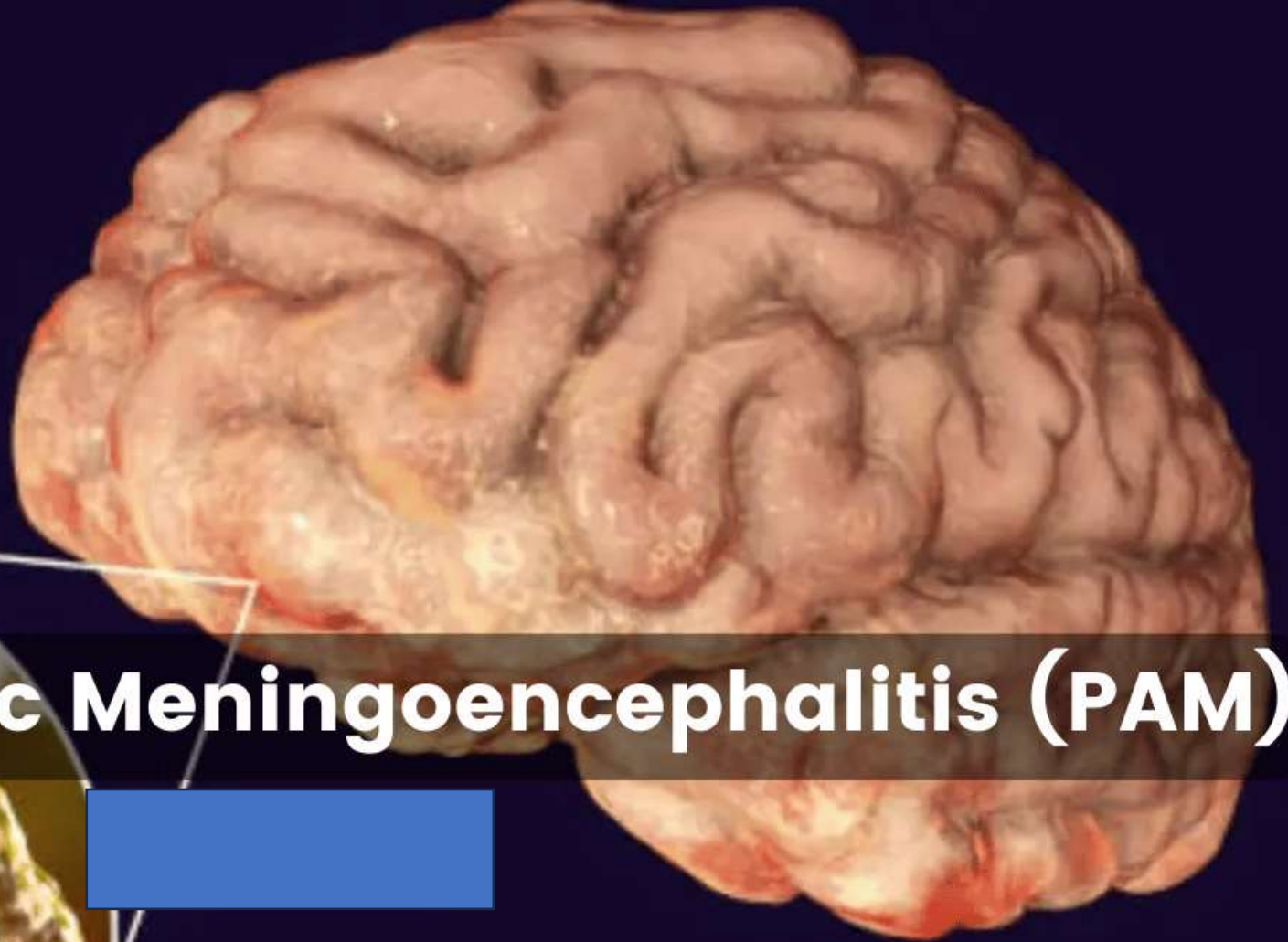
BRAIN-EATING AMOEBA

Naegleria fowleri is a microscopic amoeba that lives in warm, fresh waters. It can enter the nose and pass through the sinus membranes into the olfactory bulb, reproduces by fission and spreads throughout the brain. The amoeba consumes brain tissue, causes swelling of the brain and finally death.

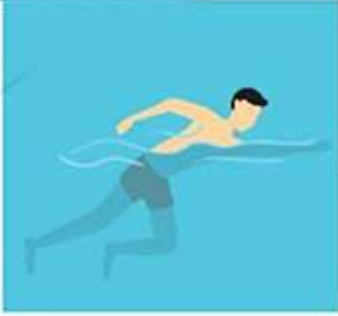
There are three stages in the amoeba's life cycle: cyst, trophozoite and a flagellated form. The trophozoite is the infectious form.



Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM)



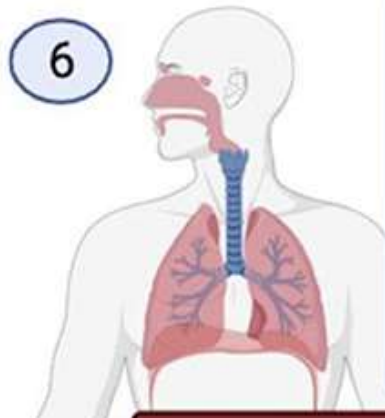
water based activities like swimming, diving, water sports, ablution etc can lead to water going up the nose



5

Amoeba penetrate the nasal mucosa

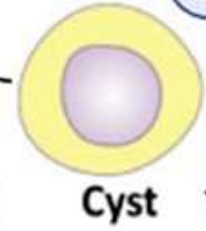
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Amoeba causes primary amoebic meningoencephalitis in healthy individuals after migrating to the brain via olfactory nerve

Trophozoites in CSF and brain tissue
Flagellated form is also sometimes found in the CSF

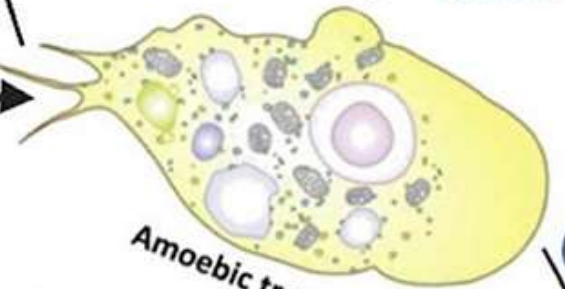
1



Cyst

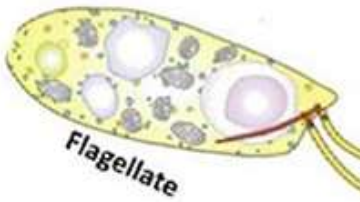


2



Amoebic trophozoite

3



Flagellate

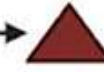
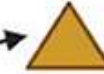
4

Promitosis

KEY

infective stage

diagnostic stage





- **Cause:** Amoebic meningoencephalitis caused by *Naegleria fowleri* (commonly called brain-eating amoeba).
- **Transmission:** Enters the body through the nose from **contaminated water** while swimming or bathing.
- **Mortality rate:** ~95% globally.
- **Recent Outbreak in Kerala (2025)**
- **Deaths reported:**
 - A **3-month-old infant** (likely contracted from well water at home).
 - **Ramla (52)** from Malappuram district (treated since July 8, died August 26).
 - **9-year-old girl** (earlier death on August 14).
- **Current toll:** 3 deaths this year.
- **Cases reported:** 42 cases so far, 31 under treatment.

- **Symptoms**

- Appear within **5–10 days** of infection.
- Fever, headache, nausea, vomiting.
- Progresses rapidly → meningitis, brain swelling, death.

- **Variants of Infection**

- **Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM)** – usually more common.
- **Granulomatous Amoebic Encephalitis (GAE)** – the strain now reported in Kerala.

Government Response

- **State-wide water sanitation drive:** Chlorination of ponds, wells, and other waterbodies.
- Public health advisories on avoiding **swimming/bathing in unsafe water**.
- Patients shifted to intensive care units in critical cases.

Historical/Global Context

- **Kerala past cases:** Sporadic, but rising in recent years.
- **India overall:** Rare but emerging due to poor water sanitation.
- **Global data:** Documented in the U.S., Pakistan, and several tropical countries.
- Mortality rate remains extremely high despite medical advances.

IN BRIEF

Indian Navy ships conclude Saudi visit with joint exercise

Indian Navy warships *INS Timgad* and *INS Surat* (in picture) concluded their port call at Jeddah in Saudi Arabia on August 30, with a passage exercise alongside the Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) corvette *HMS Jazan*, before proceeding on deployment. The ships engaged extensively with the RSNF and Saudi Border Guard through sports fixtures and interactions with personnel. On August 28, the vessels hosted Indian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Dr. Suhel Aljas Khan, on board. The visit underscored India's commitment to strengthening defence cooperation with Saudi Arabia while offering both navies opportunities to share best practices and explore future engagements.

Centre launches 'Adi Vaani' to translate Adivasi languages

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs on Monday launched the beta version of its *Adi Vaani* Adivasi language translation application and website at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi, with Minister of State Durgadas Ukey saying that it will "help bridge communication gaps for tribal communities in remote areas and empower tribal youth digitally". The government, in a statement, called it a "landmark initiative towards inclusive tribal empowerment and linguistic preservation". The app, which has been in development for over a year now, has capabilities to translate Adivasi languages to and from Hindi and English. In its first phase, the supported languages include Gondi, Bhili, Mundari, Santali, Kuli, and Garo.

New Bairabi-Sairang rail line set to improve connectivity in Mizoram

Anil Kumar Saxena
AIZAWL

Mizoram will soon be connected to the national railway network when Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the 51.38-km Bairabi-Sairang broad-gauge line, constructed at an estimated ₹5,031 crore, in the second week of September.

The new line terminating at Sairang will connect Aizawl, the State capital about 20 km away, with the rest of the country. The line links Sikkim in Assam via Bhojpur Junction, integrating the network with Assam, Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh.

Indian Railways has big plans to connect the other northeastern States of Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Sikkim with the



The line ending at Sairang, about 20 km from Aizawl, connects the State capital with other northeastern States. *Ans. Anand Saxena*

national network by 2030, a senior Northeast Frontier Railway official said. The official told visiting presspersons on Sunday that the project fulfilled the cherished dream of Mizoram residents for railway connectivity to the State capital.

While access by road took long hours of travel,

bridges with the longest being about 1.3 km and the tallest, Krung Bridge at Sairang, being 184 m from the base, 87 minor bridges, five road overbridges, and six road underbridges. Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually laid the foundation stone for the project on November 29, 2014. He virtually flagged off the first passenger train between Bairabi and Sairang on May 27, 2016.

The official said almost all essential items to Mizoram were brought from Aizawl in Assam, a journey of about 10 hours by road. With the new line, the travel time gets reduced to about three hours.

(The reporter is on a field visit organised by the Indian Railway to get a first-hand experience of the Bairabi-Sairang Line.)

Cancellation of Javed Akhtar event sparks row in Bengal

Civil rights groups accuse the State government of bowing to fundamentalist forces by cancelling the Urdu Academy programme, calling the move politically driven and a betrayal of secularism

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Civil rights groups in Kolkata have expressed concern over the cancellation of an event of the West Bengal Urdu Academy in which lyricist Javed Akhtar was scheduled to participate. While human rights groups say the State government has bowed down to fundamentalist forces, those opposing the event say they do not want to see the communal unity in West Bengal.

In an official statement, Nazim Zafar, member-secretary of the Urdu Academy, had said, "True to unavoidable circumstances, the four-day programme, Urdu in Hindi Cinema, scheduled from August 31-September 3, is being postponed."

The Association for Protection of Democratic Rights, one of the oldest human rights groups in Kolkata, has condemned the cancellation, and said the government is not doing its duty of protecting secularism as mentioned in the constitution. "There is no use appealing to the government to cancel the event again. It will not help because this decision has come from the top-most



Event on hold: An event in which poet-lyricist J. Javed Akhtar was supposed to appear has been cancelled in Kolkata. *Illustration: Anshu*

people of the government. This is a political decision right before the elections because the State does not want to anger a certain group," Rajat Bar, general secretary of the APTB, told *The Hindu* on Monday.

Janina Ullena-e-Hind, one of the groups which opposed the event, said that they were protesting against veteran poet Javed Akhtar attending the event because he has "insulted all religions and their gods including Islam".

"He may be an atheist, we do not have a problem with that, but he does not have the right to insult other people's religions. We have to maintain harmony in West Bengal. If Javed Akhtar comes here and

makes communal comments against any religion, it will disrupt the peace in the State," Zubair Rahman ACI, general secretary, Kolkata Janat Ullena-e-Hind, said.

Mr. Arif added that they were not against other events organised by the Urdu Academy of West Bengal but rather only against the one to which Mr. Akhtar was invited. However, the APTB said the decision to postpone the event is politically motivated as the Assembly election was due in 2026.

"We therefore demand from the State government that the government

should explain to the people of the State why it did this. The State government should charge its decision and bring Javed Akhtar to Kolkata with respect and hold the event," a state member from the APTB said. Nadimul Haque, Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha member and Vice-Chairman of the Urdu Academy, did not answer any questions on the cancellation of the event. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is the Chairman of the academy.

Author Taslima Nasreen said the Left front government in the past had "forced" her to leave West Bengal.

"The CPM government of West Bengal forced me to leave the State. Whose power did that strengthen? The power of the Islamist fundamentalist forces. Now they are enraged against Javed Akhtar, who has been invited by the Urdu Academy. They are declaring that he has 'insulted Islam' - we will not allow him to enter West Bengal. If he enters, we will drive him out the way we drove out Taslima," the Urdu Academy starkly helped before the Islamist fundamentalists. Even the State government itself is perhaps helpless."

Larger Bench to rule if minority-run schools are exempted from RTE Act

Krishnasudha Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday referred to a larger bench the question of whether minority educational institutions are entirely exempt from the purview of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

A two-judge Bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan made the reference in a judgment under Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education Act. The provision mandates educational institutions to provide 25% reservation for children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections at the entry level in order to foster social inclusion in elementary education.

However, the 2014 judgment concluded that Section 12(1)(c) violated the minority character of these institutions and infringed their institutional autonomy. The Constitution Bench went on to take minority institutions entirely out of the ambit of the RTE law, basing this, writing for the bench, observed that the *Pravasi Education and Cultural Trust* case, in the case, a five-



judge Bench was testing the constitutionality of Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education Act. The provision mandates educational institutions to provide 25% reservation for children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections at the entry level in order to foster social inclusion in elementary education.

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SC seeks response to transgender-inclusive sex education plea

Anantika Bhattacharya
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the Union government, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), and several States on a petition seeking the integration of transgender-inclusive comprehensive sexuality education into school curriculum across the country.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan K. Gopal and Justice K. Vinod Chandran issued notice on the petition filed by Kaavya Mukherjee Saha, a 16-year-old student from Delhi, and directed the respondents to file their replies within six weeks.

Appearing for the petitioner, senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan submitted that despite the Supreme Court's 2014 judgment in *National Legal Services Authority v Union of India* mandating the integration of comprehensive sexuality education in school education, the directive remains unimplemented. He cited a recent Right to Information (RTI) reply in which NCERT advised that the introduction of such material in its curriculum would be "inappropriate". "This shows the orders of this court remain unim-



The court order on integration of comprehensive sexuality education is not implemented.

plemented." Mr. Sankaranarayanan said, stressing that sexuality education must encompass gender sensitisation and transgender-inclusive perspectives.

The plea alleged that the NCERT and most State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) had failed to include examinable modules on gender identity, gender diversity, and the distinction between sex and gender, despite explicit obligations under Sections 26b and 23 of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019. Textbook reviews from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka revealed systemic omissions, with Kerala's partial exception.

The petitioner said these omissions violate the right to equality and undermined the Directive Principles of State Policy.

Minority status seems to have become a vehicle for circumventing the mandate of the RTE Act and tool to achieve autonomous status.

DIPANKAR DATTA
DEEPAK DATTA

minority character of these institutions and infringed their institutional autonomy. The Constitution Bench went on to take minority institutions entirely out of the ambit of the RTE law, basing this, writing for the bench, observed that the *Pravasi Education and Cultural Trust* case, in the case, a five-judge Bench was testing the constitutionality of Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education Act. The provision mandates educational institutions to provide 25% reservation for children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections at the entry level in order to foster social inclusion in elementary education.

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FAITH

Duties of a householder

Yudhishtira tells the sages, who want to go to the forest with the Pandavas, that while he likes the company of learned men, he does not want them to suffer in the forest. In the Mahabharata, we find Yudhishtira advising Bhishma to always seek the company of the learned. Those with knowledge will give proper and timely advice to those who are with. Yudhishtira tells the sages that he does not desire wealth for himself, said Kishore Narayan in a discourse. But wealth is necessary if he is to take care of the interests of the sages. A householder has the important duty of having to provide for himself. A saint should always have *daridra* (poor), good water and a proper place to carry out his duties. A householder must ensure that sages are given whatever they need.

In addition, a *grahastha* must provide water for the *thali*, a resting place for those who are tired, and food for the hungry. Unfortunately, Yudhishtira now has nothing. He has been deprived of all his possessions. How then can he take care of the *sadhus* if they insist on following him? This is his worry. Every man should treat guests, relatives and members of his family with respect. Even when one cooks food, one must never do it with the thought that one is preparing food for oneself. One must think of how to share the food with those who lack the means to have a hearty meal. Suppose one comes across a man who is a total stranger. If one finds him tired after a long journey, one should immediately give him food. This too is the duty of a householder. Yudhishtira tells sage Saunaka that the highest *dharma* is for a man to carry out all the duties of a householder without fail.

TH CROSSWORD 14578



Across

- 7 That lady in a complex medical condition (6)
- 8 Speaker's instructions to batter and punters' misnomer (10)
- 9 Transporter of stable beings? (8)
- 10 Shabby wicker about a state in India (4-2)

Down

- 1 Honey producer's letter chase meets dead end? (8)
- 2 Not delivered a mouth freshener? (6)
- 3 Do these small broken pieces somehow endorse (them)? (11)
- 4 A few and secure state (6)
- 5 Replicate unfortunate ban on P. Portal (8)
- 6 Count a mountainous, say (6)
- 7 Camp site escapes for a bit of leftover modesty (8)
- 8 Every now and then Mahomet procured cleaners in vehicles (8)
- 9 Fortiori and bawled, Hoot's extremely laggarly (6)
- 10 What? Enos (Olympian-God) smuggled an atomiser? (7)
- 11 Unit of measurement's converted? Not grams (8)
- 12 Yaitoo, clear in fiction books (6)
- 13 Oddly Beau robbed crude grill (10)
- 14 Confound about small subterranean (1-5)
- 15 Chapters about the French Applications? (7)
- 16 Trash poem's incongruous literary device (9,8)
- 17 Plant bees around malls, airports, restaurants and cemented kerbs from the beginning (9)
- 18 Ung repeatedly chopped up? It's bothersome (8)
- 19 Secret sauce known for its restricted (1,6)
- 20 Section of Rappley let a Yee make a comeback in August (7)
- 21 Soused opening large lets in accommodations for cold folks? (8)
- 22 Specifically shop returns to city in England (8)

SUDOKU



New Bairabi-Sairang rail line set to improve connectivity in Mizoram

Anil Kumar Sastry

AIZAWL

Mizoram will soon be connected to the national railway network when Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the 51.38-km Bairabi-Sairang broad-gauge line, constructed at an estimated ₹5,021 crore, in the second week of September.

The new line terminating at Sairang will connect Aizawl, the State capital about 20 km away, with the rest of the country. The line links Silchar in Assam via Bhodahpur Junction, integrating the network with Assam, Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh.

Indian Railways has big plans to connect the other northeastern States of Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Sikkim with the



The line ending at Sairang, about 20 km from Aizawl, connects the State capital with other northeastern States. ANIL KUMAR SASTRY

national network by 2030, a senior Northeast Frontier Railway official said.

The official told visiting presspersons on Sunday that the project fulfilled the cherished dream of Mizoram residents for railway connectivity to the State capital.

While access by road took long hours of travel,

flying was expensive. Travel by train would provide an affordable options to all categories of people, besides boosting economic activities in the region with a special focus on tourism, the official said.

The new line has 48 tunnels with a total length of 12.85 km, the longest being about 1.37 km; 55 major

bridges with the longest being about 1.3 km and the tallest, Krung Bridge at Sairang, being 114 m from the base; 87 minor bridges; five road overbridges; and six road underbridges.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually laid the foundation stone for the project on November 29, 2014. He virtually flagged off the first passenger train between Bairabi and Silchar on May 27, 2016.

The official said almost all essential items to Mizoram were brought from Silchar in Assam, a journey of about 10 hours by road. With the new line, the travel time gets reduced to about three hours.

(The reporter is on a field visit organised by the Indian Railways to get a first-hand experience of the Bairabi-Sairang-Line.)



DEEPER CONNECTIVITY IN NORTH-EAST

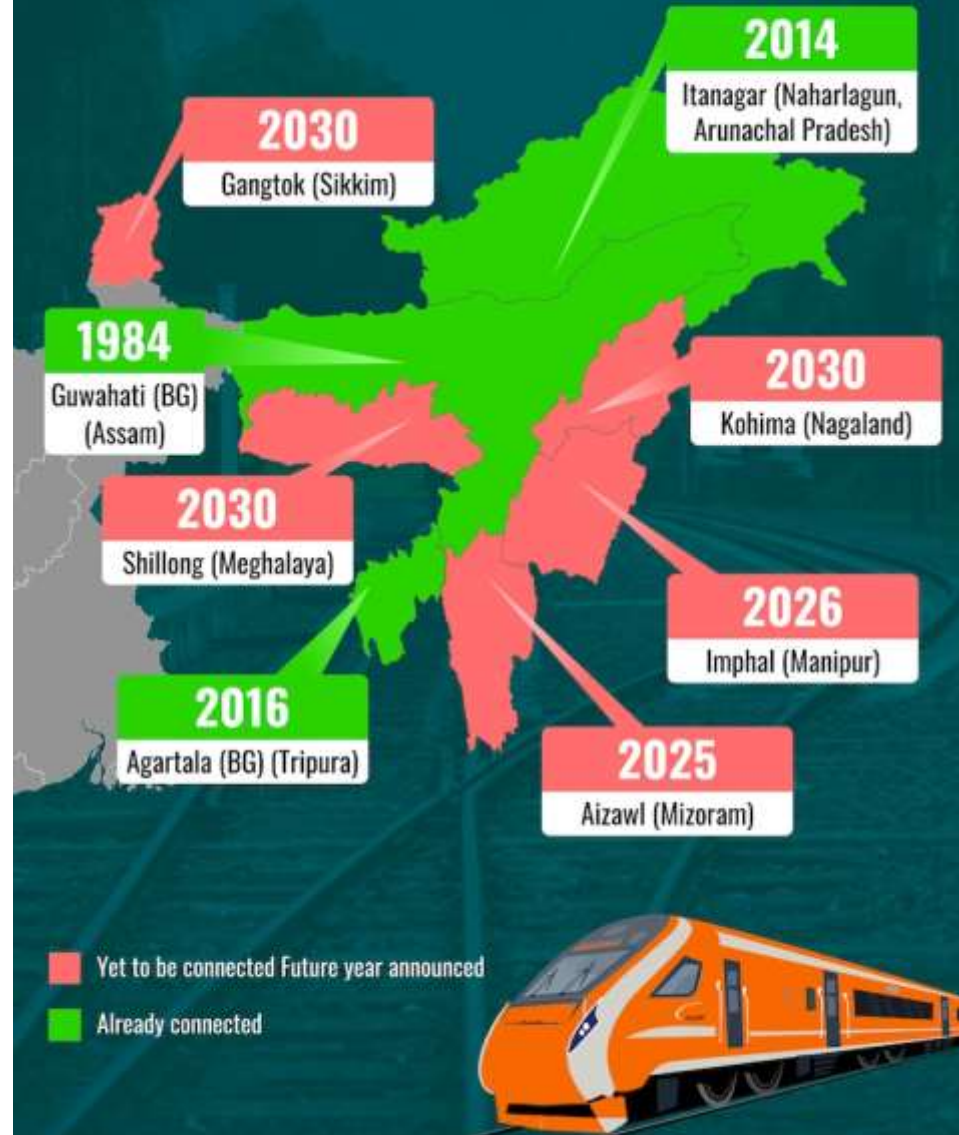


Projects in the Northeast

	Total length (km)	Target date for entire link
Jiribam-Imphal 1	110.6	Dec-23
Brynihat-Shillong 2	108.4	Not fixed
Dimapur-Kohima 3	82.5	Mar-26
Bairabi-Sairang 4	51.4	Mar-24
Sivok-Rangpo 5	45	Mar-23
Tetelia-Byrnihat 6	21.5	Nov 2023*



INDIAN RAILWAYS IN THE NORTHEAST



-
- **Project Inauguration:** PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate the **51.38 km broad-gauge rail line** in September.
 - **Cost:** ₹5,021 crore.
 - **Connectivity:** Connects **Silchar (Assam) → Bhodaphur Junction → Sairang (20 km from Aizawl)**.
 - **Integration:** Links Mizoram with the **national railway grid** and Northeastern states (Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim).

- **Infrastructure Details**

- **Tunnels:** 48 tunnels, total length 12.85 km (longest 1.37 km).
- **Bridges:** 55 major bridges (longest 1.3 km, tallest Krung Bridge at 114 m); 87 minor bridges; 5 road overbridges; 6 underbridges.
- **Foundation:** Laid in November 2014.
- **First Passenger Train:** Between Bairabi & Silchar, May 27, 2016.



Socio-Economic Impact


1. Economic Benefits

- Reduces **Silchar–Mizoram travel time** from 10 hours (by road) → 3 hours (by rail).
- Boosts **trade, agriculture, and tourism** in Mizoram.
- Affordable transport → Encourages business activity.

2. Strategic Significance

- Enhances connectivity in the **Northeast border state**.
- Reduces dependence on roads (long travel, landslide risks).
- Strengthens **India's Act East Policy** by improving access to Southeast Asia.

3. Local Benefits

- Fulfills Mizoram's **long-cherished demand** for railway access to Aizawl.
 - Facilitates easy transport of essential commodities.
- 

01

Railways in Northeast:

India aims to connect all Northeastern state capitals to the national rail grid by **2030**.

02

Historical Background:

The Northeast Frontier Railway has been working on expanding lines since colonial times but progress was slow due to terrain and insurgency.

03

Strategic Context:

Strengthens **border infrastructure** amid China's increasing activity near Mizoram & Arunachal borders.

Larger Bench to rule if minority-run schools are exempted from RTE Act

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday referred to a larger Bench the question of whether minority educational institutions are entirely exempt from the purview of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

A two-judge Bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan made the reference in a judgment based on a batch of civil appeals questioning school education departments' insistence on faculty clearing the Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) in minority institutions.

The reference stems from apprehensions over a Constitution Bench verdict of 2014 in *Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust* case. In the case, a five-



judge Bench was testing the constitutionality of Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education Act. The provision mandates educational institutions to provide 25% reservation for children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections at the entry level in order to foster social inclusion in elementary education.

However, the 2014 judgment concluded that Section 12(1)(c) violated the mi-



Minority status seems to have become a vehicle for circumventing the mandate of the RTE Act and tool to achieve autonomous status

DIPANKAR DATTA
SUPREME COURT JUDGE

nority character of these institutions and impacted their institutional autonomy. The Constitution Bench went on to take minority institutions entirely out of the ambit of the RTE law. Justice Datta, writing for the Bench, observed that the *Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust* judgment has “unknowingly jeopardised the very foundation of universal elementary education”.

“Exemption of minority institutions from the RTE Act leads to fragmentation of the common schooling vision and weakening of the idea of inclusivity and universality envisioned by Article 21A. We are afraid, instead of uniting children across caste, class, creed, and community, it reinforces ‘divides’ and ‘dilutes’ the transformative potential of shared learning spaces,” Justice Datta pointed out.

The judge wrote that the 2014 judgment has led to misuse. “Minority status seems to have become a vehicle for circumventing the mandate of the RTE Act. In our humble opinion, it has opened up a situation whereby multiple institutions have sought to acquire minority status to become autonomous,” Justice Datta observed.

- **Case Reference:** SC referred the issue to a **larger Bench** on whether minority educational institutions are exempt from the *Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009*.
 - Triggered by **civil appeals** questioning school education departments' insistence on faculty clearing **Teachers Eligibility Test (TET)** in minority institutions.
-

2. Constitutional Context

- **Article 21A:** Ensures free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14.
- **Section 12(1)(c), RTE Act, 2009:** Mandates **25% reservation** for disadvantaged children in all schools at the entry level.
- **2014 Constitution Bench Verdict (Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust Case):**
 - Ruled that applying Section 12(1)(c) to minority institutions violated their minority rights under **Article 30**.
 - Emphasized **institutional autonomy** of minority schools.

3. SC's Observations Now

- **Justice Dipankar Datta** (writing for the Bench):
 - Expressed concern that **minority status is being misused**.
 - Many institutions use minority status as a **tool to bypass RTE compliance** and become autonomous.
 - Warned this trend could **"jeopardise the very foundation of universal elementary education"**.
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4. Key Concerns Highlighted

- **Fragmentation of Education:**
 - Exempting minority schools from RTE could weaken inclusivity and universality of Article 21A.
 - Could reinforce caste, class, creed, and community divides.
- **Impact on National Integration:**
 - Risk of diluting the transformative potential of **shared learning spaces**.
- **Balance of Rights:**
 - Need to reconcile **minority rights under Article 30** with **children's right to education under Article 21A**.

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- **Judicial Review:** The Larger Bench ruling will clarify if **all minority-run schools are entirely exempt** or if **limited RTE compliance can be mandated**.
 - **Policy Impact:** May affect thousands of minority institutions nationwide.
 - **Educational Equity:** The decision could set precedent for how India balances **cultural autonomy vs. social justice in education**.

Past Cases:

- *T.M.A. Pai Foundation vs. State of Karnataka (2002)* → Recognised minority institutions' rights but subject to reasonable regulations.
- *Pramati Case (2014)* → Minority institutions exempted from RTE obligations.

Policy Dimension:

- Debate between **autonomy of minority institutions** vs. **inclusivity in schooling**.
- Could redefine scope of **Article 30** in light of **Right to Education as a Fundamental Right**.

Word of the day

Salacious:

suggestive of or tending to moral looseness;
characterised by lust

Synonyms: lustful, lewd, obscene, raunchy

Usage: *Do not indulge in such salacious gossip.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/salaciouspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /sə'leɪ.ʃəs/



Thank you 😊

