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At NITI Aayog meet PM calls for states' participation

PM Narendra Modi on Saturday chaired the first NITI Aayog governing council meeting on Saturday .

The meeting was attended by 26 state representatives and UTs . And those from 10 states were absent . All opposition ruled states except West Bengal were absent .

PM Narendra Modi in his speech said that the dream of ' Bharat 2047 ' can be achieved only through the combined effort of all states .

“ Viksit Bharat 2047 is the ambition of every Indian . States can play an active role in achieving this aim as they are directly connected with the people “ , the PM said .

West Bengal CM Mamta Banerjee came out “ boycotting the meeting “ . She alleged that she was not given enough time to speak , compared to other CMs .

The allegation however was hit back by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman who said that every CMs was allotted a fixed amount of time and that was appearing on a screen.

Soldiers ,Pak infiltrator killed near LoC in J&K's Kupwara

An Army soldier and a Pakistani infiltrator was killed in a gunfight along LoC in Kupwara district in North Kashmir .

An Army spokesperson said that a group of two or three infiltrators took advantage of the close bad weather and poor visibility and fired on an Army post in the Machil sector . On retaliatory firing one terrorist was killed while another was injured .



Modi is likely to visit Ukraine on August 23 , modalities being worked out , says official .

PM Narendra Modi is likely to visit Ukraine on August 23 . The official has said .

This will be PM Modi's first visit to Ukraine after the Russia Ukraine war started . Officials have said that modalities were being worked out for the meeting.

Earlier PM Modi's visit to Russia was criticised by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and USA NSA who called it “ disappointing “ in terms of “ symbolism and timing “ .

Gaganyaan astronaut to travel to ISS in mission with NASA

One of the four undergoing training for the Gaganyaan mission will travel to the International Space Station (ISS) as part of a collaborative effort with NASA .

ISRO has signed a space flight agreement with a US firm for the joint mission to the ISS .

Mr Jitendra Singh said in a reply in Lok Sabha .



Meghalaya group turn away vehicle from outside state

Tourism in Meghalaya took a hit after some pressure groups turned away private vehicles registered to other states .

Members of Hynniewtrep National Youth Federation (HYNF) , a pressure group , started turning away vehicles after a call was issued not to let transporters from outside the state operate .

This was followed by a drive by Khasi Students Union and the Federation of Khasi Jaintia Garo People – against migrant labourers or “illegal migrants “ employed in the state without “ work permit “ . Over the past few days , the drive saw more than 2500 labourers exit Meghalaya .

The incident has led to a drop in hotels by 30 % on Friday and 35% on Saturday . Police have intervened and about 10 members of HYNF have been arrested . The pressure groups have stopped their activities to turn outsiders away .

The actions of the pressure group are related to demand to implement Meghalaya Residents’ safety and security Act , and British era inner permit lines , which are deemed protective shields for indigenous communities against outsiders .

GNLf issues ‘ultimatum’ to form a separate

A suggestion by Union Minister of State for Development of North East Sukanta Majumdar that six North Bengal districts be included in the North Eastern Council (NEC) has stirred the demand of a separate state Gorkhaland .

Mr Majumdar said that he had given such a proposal to PM Modi .

Gorkhaland National Liberation Front (GNLf) on Saturday gave an ultimatum to BJP leadership to settle the long pending demand of a separate state for Gorkhas by April 5 , 2025 .

Gorkhas are Nepali speaking Indians , who reside mainly in Darjeeling , Kalimpong , Jalpaiguri and Cooch Bihar districts of North Bengal .

The demand for a separate state is from the 1980s . Currently Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) is a semi autonomous body under the sixth schedule and has greater autonomy for the region.



Environmentalists alarmed as Himachal witness snowfall pattern shift

Himachal Pradesh has not only witnessed a shift in snowfall pattern , but also a reducing snow cover over the years .

Snowfall pattern has shifted from winter months to early summer months , raising concerns about the ecology of the region.

A decrease in snowfall in peak winter months could affect water availability in summers . Satluj , Ravi , Chenab and Beas rivers in Himachal Pradesh have witnessed a decrease of 12.72% of area under snow in 2023-24 winters in comparison to 2022 -23 .



World : _____

At least 30 killed in an airstrike on school used by displaced people

Israeli airstrikes hit a school being used by displaced Palestinians in central Gaza on Saturday, killing at least 30 people. Seven children and seven women were among the dead.

The launch was at a school in Deir Al Balah. Israeli's military said that it targeted a Hamas command centre used to direct attack against Israeli troops and develop and store "large quantities of weapons". Hamas in a statement called the military's claim false.

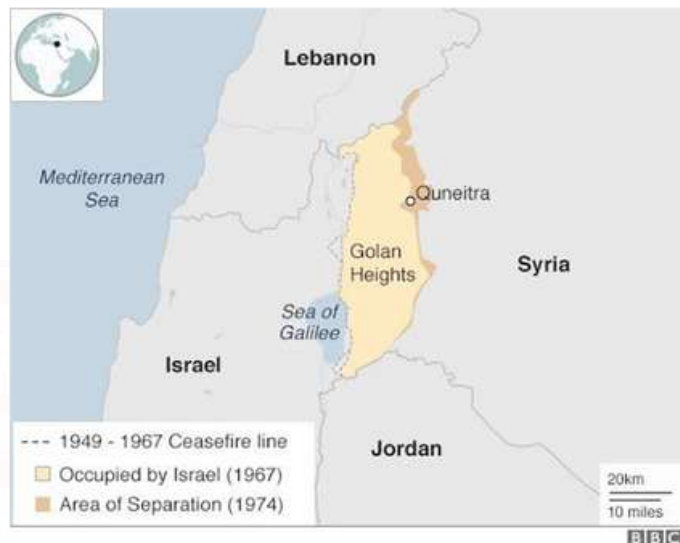


Hezbollah attack kills 10 in annexed Golan, says Israel

Israeli medical emergency services said that Hezbollah had killed at least 10 in the annexed Golan heights by a barrage of rockets fired from Lebanon.

The rocket hit the Arab town of Mandal Shams. This comes after an Israeli rocket strike killed four Hezbollah fighters in Lennon.

Hezbollah however has denied the role in this strike. Golan heights was captured by Israel from Syria in 1967 Arab Israeli war. Since then this strategically important location is in Israeli control.



Blinken meets Wang, flags Chinese actions surrounding Taiwan

US secretary of state Antony Blinken held a meeting with Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on the sidelines of the ASEAN summit in Vientiane, Laos. The US hailed it as an "open and productive" discussion.

Mr Blinken raised the issue of Chinese action around Taiwan and its "escalatory and unlawful action in South China Sea."

Beijing warns Manila of 'resolute action' response in South China sea

China's foreign Minister Wang Yi met his counterpart from the Philippines on the sidelines of the ASEAN meeting in Vientiane, Laos.

Wang Yi called on the Philippines to "honour its commitment" under the recent deal about Second Thomas Shoal, "otherwise, China will definitely respond resolutely", he said.



Mr Wang also warned the Phillipines of deploying a US missile defence system saying that it will “ create tension and confrontation in the region and trigger an arms race . “ .

China and the Philippines had last week signed a “ provisional agreement “ for resupply mission to Filipino troops stationed at Second Thomas Shoal . The reef has seen violent clashes between two countries in recent months .

Second Thomas Shoal reef has a world war 2 ship stationed on which Filipino troops reside . The island is claimed by the Philippines.



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