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NEPAL FLASH FLOODS

Devastating flash floods struck Nepal's Rasuwa district, sending water, sediment, and boulders surging through the **Bhote Koshi** and **Trishuli rivers** near the Nepal-Tibet border.

The disaster damaged settlements, roads, bridges, and power infrastructure, with many people confirmed dead and hundreds reported missing, including foreign travellers.

Scientists and meteorologists are now examining multiple possible triggers — an ice-rock avalanche, an earthquake, and a western disturbance interacting with monsoon rainfall.

Scale of the Flood

- Experts highlighted the "exceptional speed and magnitude" of the flood: water levels reportedly rose as much as 9 metres within 30 minutes on the Trishuli river at Galchhi, and by 7 metres at Malekhu — both in Dhading district, roughly 80 km from Kathmandu.
- They are also examining whether debris temporarily blocked the river at a narrow section, forming a landslide dam that could pose a "secondary hazard" if the impounded water were suddenly released.
- Early seismic analysis identified unusual signals during the disaster period, though no immediate causal link to the floods has been established.

The Ice-Rock Avalanche Theory

- Scientists from the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) — a Nepal-based intergovernmental institution leading efforts to protect the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region — are investigating whether **an ice-rock avalanche** from a high-altitude area triggered the flash flood.
- ICIMOD's preliminary assessment suggests a **large volume of ice and rock debris** may have entered the **Lende Khola**, a tributary of the Bhote Koshi river, generating a sudden surge that carried water, sediment, and large boulders downstream.
 - An ice avalanche involves the sudden collapse and downhill movement of a large ice mass from a hanging glacier or an ice-covered mountain.

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- It noted that the same site was devastated by a similar flood last year, and warned that with a blockage still lodged upstream on the Nepal-China border, a **second flood is imminent** — prompting evacuation orders for Jilong port.

The Earthquake and Landslide Angle

- Nepal's Foreign Minister indicated that **an earthquake** occurred in the area shortly before the flooding and may have triggered an avalanche or landslide behind the surge.
- Nepal and China are jointly investigating the exact sequence of events.
- Separately, researchers' preliminary assessment suggested an **ice avalanche may have blocked a river**, allowing water to accumulate before its sudden downstream release.

The Western Disturbance and Monsoon Link

- According to experts at India Meteorological Department (IMD), a **western disturbance** that brought rain to parts of northern India and subsequently moved eastwards towards the Himalayas may have contributed to the weather conditions preceding the floods.
- They noted that the **interaction between weather systems and hilly terrain** "might have played a role," as the same western disturbance system moved eastwards, increasing rainfall activity toward the northeast and Himalayan region.
- However, they cautioned there was **insufficient information** to confirm a cloudburst had occurred.
- They stressed that the western disturbance should be seen as "**a possible contributor to the broader rainfall environment** rather than an established direct cause" — with the immediate mechanism behind the sudden water release still under investigation.
 - The western disturbance persisted as a cyclonic circulation over north Haryana as of August 26.

- Conclusion**

The Nepal flash floods illustrate the complex, **layered nature of Himalayan disaster triggers** — where glacial hazards, seismic activity, and monsoon weather systems can interact to produce catastrophic outcomes.

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RESEARCH FUNDING IN INDIA - NITI AAYOG'S FINDINGS

- A recent NITI Aayog report on 'Ease of Doing R&D in India', along with surveys covering more than **400 institutional leaders and 850 scientists**, has highlighted gaps in India's research funding ecosystem.
- The NITI Aayog report found that **close to 80% of funding under the ANRF is concentrated in the IITs**.
- This is significant because the ANRF was created with a broader mandate to expand the research base beyond the traditional concentration of public research funding.
- The finding raises questions about whether public R&D funding is reaching a sufficiently broad range of universities and research institutions.

Research and Development(R&D) in India

- R&D refers to systematic work undertaken to generate new knowledge, develop technologies, improve existing products and processes, and solve scientific and technological problems.
- R&D is important for economic growth because it can improve productivity, technological capabilities, innovation and competitiveness.
- Public funding is particularly important in areas where research involves high risks, long gestation periods or uncertain commercial returns.
- India's public R&D ecosystem includes multiple ministries, departments and agencies that provide grants to universities, research institutions and individual scientists.
- The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) is the country's flagship research funding body, established to promote research and innovation across universities, colleges, research institutions and laboratories.
- However, effective public funding requires not only adequate financial resources but also the ability to answer basic questions: Who received funding? Which agency provided it? For what research? How much was provided? And has similar research already received public funding elsewhere?

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Fragmented Research Funding Data

- A major problem identified in the report is the absence of a **unified system for tracking public R&D funding**.
- Information about publicly funded research is currently spread across numerous government agency databases.
- These databases often use different formats and may contain information as **free text rather than structured data**. This creates difficulties in identifying researchers, institutions and projects across agencies.

Risk of Overlapping Research Funding

- The fragmented nature of the data also creates the possibility that **multiple Central agencies may fund similar or overlapping research areas**.
- Without a system linking grants, researchers, institutions and research outputs, it becomes difficult for funding agencies to determine whether a particular research proposal is substantially similar to work that has already received public funding.
- This can result in inefficient use of public resources and makes it difficult to assess the overall distribution of research funding across different fields and institutions.

Two Broad Options for India

- **A New National System**
 - India could develop a completely independent **sovereign national grant registry**.
 - The advantage would be greater control over the system and the ability to incorporate India's specific institutional structure, including research schemes operated by State governments.
 - **Integration with Existing Global Infrastructure**
 - The second option would be for Indian funding agencies to join and consistently contribute data to existing international infrastructure such as the **Crossref ecosystem**.
 - This could be implemented more quickly because technical standards and governance mechanisms already exist.
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INDIA-CHINA BORDER TALKS - FROM DE-ESCALATION TO STRUCTURED BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT

- India and China have agreed to accelerate discussions on an “**Early and Substantial Harvest**” in boundary delimitation and border management, while strengthening military-to-military communication along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- The **eight-point consensus** seeks to consolidate the relative stabilisation of India-China ties by preventing border incidents from escalating and creating conditions for broader bilateral engagement.

India-China Boundary Dispute:

- It covers an approximately **3,488-km** contested frontier and involves differing perceptions of the LAC, where both nations claim **overlapping territories** rooted in British colonial-era agreements.
- **Key sectors of the dispute:**
 - **Western sector (Aksai Chin):** China controls roughly 38,000 square kilometers of land that India claims as part of Ladakh.
 - **Eastern sector (Arunachal Pradesh):** China claims nearly 90,000 square kilometers of territory, referring to the region as Zangnan or Southern Tibet, based on its rejection of the **1914 McMahon Line**.
 - **Central sector:** A smaller overlapping segment spanning Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand where differences are relatively minor.
- The 2020 eastern Ladakh crisis significantly disrupted bilateral relations, making restoration of peace and tranquillity a prerequisite for normalisation.

Towards an “Early and Substantial Harvest” on the Boundary:

- Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to negotiations for a **fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable** settlement of the boundary question.
- This must be guided by the **2005 Agreement** on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles and subsequent SR-level consensus.

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Strengthening Military Communication:

- The two countries agreed to -
 - **Establish** two additional meeting points for General/Senior Highest Military Commander-level interactions.
 - **Create** two additional military hotlines in the Eastern and Middle Sectors.
 - **Address** ground situations promptly through diplomatic and military channels, including the WMCC and local commander-level meetings.
- The objective is to prevent misunderstanding, miscalculation and escalation arising from localised incidents along the LAC.

Border Trade, Pilgrimage and People-to-People Engagement:

- Both sides welcomed the reopening of **three** designated border trading points and agreed to strengthen cooperation in border trade, pilgrimage, and other exchanges in border areas.
- India also appreciated China's efforts to increase the number of batches for the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra.

Trans-Border Rivers and the Brahmaputra:

- India and China agreed to hold the next meeting of the Expert-Level Mechanism on Trans-border Rivers in September.
- This is particularly important for the **Brahmaputra** (Yarlung Tsangpo), whose upper reaches originate in Tibet before flowing into India and Bangladesh.
- **India's concerns** include downstream ecological impacts, flood management, sediment flows and the implications of Chinese hydropower projects in the Brahmaputra's upper basin.

Conclusion:

- India must pursue a **dual-track approach**—maintaining military preparedness and infrastructure along the LAC while sustaining diplomatic engagement.
- Progress on delimitation should be incremental, verifiable and based on established agreements.

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

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SMALL INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT BANK OF INDIA



- It was **established on 2nd April, 1990** by the Govt. of India under an act of the Parliament, as a wholly owned subsidiary of IDBI Bank.
- It was delinked from IDBI on March 27, 2000.
- **Mandate:** It is mandated to serve as the **Principal Financial Institution** for executing the triple agenda of **promotion, financing and development of the MSME sector** and coordination of the functions of the various Institutions engaged in similar activities.
- **Headquarters:** Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Functions:**
 - It offers direct loans and **refinancing to banks and NBFCs**.
 - It promotes entrepreneurship and MSME growth.
 - Provides venture capital and technology support
 - Financial support to MSMEs is provided by way of
 - Indirect/refinance to banks/Financial Institutions for onward lending to MSMEs
 - Direct finance in niche areas like risk capital, sustainable finance, receivable financing, service sector financing, etc
 - SIDBI was made responsible for administering the **Small Industries Development Fund** and the **National Equity Fund** that were administered by IDBI before.

MILITARY COMBAT PARACHUTE SYSTEM



- It is indigenously developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- **Organizations involved:** It has been designed by DRDO's Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment, Agra, and Defence Bioengineering and Electromedical Laboratory, Bengaluru.

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- **Features of Military Combat Parachute System:**
 - It is the only parachute system currently in operational use by the Indian Armed Forces **capable of deployment above 25,000 feet.**
 - It consists of several enhanced tactical features, including a **lower rate of descent** and superior steering capabilities.
 - The system has compatibility with **Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC).**
- **Significance:**
 - It enables **paratroopers to safely exit aircraft, deploy parachutes** at predetermined altitudes, navigate accurately, and land at designated zones.
 - It has opened doors for induction of Indigenous parachute systems.
 - This will also **reduce dependency on other** nations for its serviceability during times of conflict and war.

MISSION SAMRIDDH GAON



- It is aimed at **developing poverty-free, employment-rich villages** equipped with assured basic amenities.
- The pilot models will be developed in **Budni block of Sehore district and Khategaon block of Dewas district.**
- **Objective:** To develop model villages where **every family has an employment or livelihood opportunity**, basic amenities are available and **people do not have to migrate out of compulsion.**
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Rural Development

Features of Mission Samriddh Gaon:

- **Integrated Development Framework:** Under this initiative an **integrated development framework** will be prepared at the **family, gram panchayat and block levels** in the selected areas.

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- **Convergence of government schemes:** Schemes related to **agriculture and rural development**, along with **health, education, employment**, livelihoods and other basic amenities, will be brought together under the mission.
- Each family will be **linked to various Central and State government schemes** based on its needs and eligibility.
- It will also **focus on identifying women farmers**, providing them with agricultural advice and necessary information, and connecting rural women with livelihood opportunities.

NEELAKURINJI



- It is the **flowering shrub which blooms once in 12 years**.
- It belongs to the **Acanthaceae family** and was first scientifically described in the nineteenth century by Nees von Esenbeck.
- It is **semelparous** with **showy synchronous blooming** and fruiting at every 12 years at the end of the life cycle, which has been reported since 1832.
- **Habitat:** It is seen only in the **high-altitude shola grassland ecosystems** of five mountain landscapes of southwest India at an elevation of 1,340–2,600 m.
- **Distribution:** Neelakurinji Flowers **occur only in India**, confined to five mountain landscapes of the Western and Eastern Ghats.
- **Conservation Status:** Listed as **Vulnerable under IUCN Red List** Criteria A2c due to approximately 40% habitat loss.
- **Cultural significance:**
 - Nilgiri Hills (Literally meaning the blue mountains), got their name from the **blue flowers of Neelakurinji**.
 - The **Paliyan tribes** (in Tamil Nadu) use it as a reference to **calculate their age**.
- **Threats:** It is threatened mainly due to its fragile habitat in the montane high altitude grasslands that has been under pressure of conversion for **tea and softwood plantations, and urbanization**.