

TRAI recommends measures to boost telecom infra in North Eastern states

NEW DELHI, Sept 23 (PTI)

TRAI has issued recommendations for bolstering telecom infrastructure in North East, suggesting parleys with the state Governments to harmonise their respective 'right of way' policies with related Central rules, as well as favouring provision of electricity to telecom sites on priority at utility tariffs.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) noted that while a number of initiatives have been taken by the Government to improve telecom connectivity in the north-eastern states, there is still a lack of high-speed mobile-based internet and fixed broadband connectivity, mainly due to the inadequate transmission bandwidth (optical fibre, Microwave and satellite).

"The Northeast states con-



tinue to grapple with a significant digital divide due to various reasons such as inhospitable terrain conditions, poor availability of power supply, transmission media related limitations, poor return of investment prospects for TSPs, and Right of Way (RoW) related issues," the sector regulator said in a release.

The Northeastern Region

(NER) comprises the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura - together they form part of the East Himalayan region. The latest recommendations by TRAI assume significance given that while average tele-density of India (as of April 2023) stood at 84.46 per cent, the teledensity in Assam state is 71 per cent and that of Northeast Licensed Service Area consisting of six states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura is 79.6 per cent.

The digital divide hampers the region's socio-economic growth, restricts access to essential services and information, and exacerbates the developmental gap between the Northeast and the rest of the country, TRAI noted.

Indian Army unit leaves for Russia to take part in military drill

NEW DELHI, Sept 23 (IANS)

AN INDIAN Army contingent consisting of 32 personnel from a Rajputana Rifles battalion has departed for Russia to participate in a counter terrorism field training exercise scheduled to be conducted from September 25 to 30, Defence Ministry announced.

The multinational joint military exercise being hosted by Russia is part of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Expert Working Group on Counter Terrorism. Russia is a co-chair of the EWG along with

Myanmar. Since 2017, the meet is held annually to allow dialogue and cooperation among Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Plus countries.

The exercise will comprise of a number of counter terrorism drills including destroying of terrorist groups in a fortified area. The main objective of the exercise is strengthening and promoting regional cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism.

It will provide the Indian Army with a platform to share their expertise.

PM lays foundation stone of cricket stadium in Varanasi

VARANASI (UP), Sept 23 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of an international cricket stadium in his parliamentary constituency Varanasi on Saturday.

Former India cricketers, including Sachin Tendulkar and Ravi Shastri, BCCI President Roger Binny, its vice-president Rajiv Shukla and secretary Jay Shah were present on the occasion. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also attended the function.

Cricket legend Sachin



PM Modi with UP CM Yogi Adityanath, BCCI President Roger Binny and former cricketers Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly during the foundation stone laying ceremony of an international cricket stadium, in Varanasi on Saturday. (PTI)

Tendulkar and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah on Saturday presented Prime Minister Narendra Modi with an Indian cricket team jersey with "NAMO" inscribed on it.

Among other cricketing stalwarts attending the event were Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev, and former India international and head coach Ravi Shastri.

Shah and Binny also presented a specially signed bat to PM Modi.

Underscoring the
(Contd on page 5)

Indian contingent wins hearts at Asian Games opening

HANGZHOU, Sept 23 (IANS)

THE Indian contingent resplendent in their golden-tinged ceremonial livery walked out in the eighth position in a march-past, at the inaugural ceremony of Hangzhou Asian Games in China with water and tide as theme, winning applause from spectators.

The Indian contingent was led by flag-bearers Harmanpreet Singh, captain of the men's hockey team, and boxer Lovlina Borgohain. Though the contingent includes 921 members including 625 sportspersons, 260 coaches and other support staff, only 200 of them participated in the ceremony as many sportspersons had events on Sunday.



Flag-bearers (L) Lovlina Borgohain and Harmanpreet Singh lead the (R) Indian contingent during the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium, in Hangzhou, China on Saturday. (PTI)



The 90-minute-long programme captured China's cultural heritage and romantic imagery through the melding of its thousands-of-years-old civilisation and modern technology through stunning visuals, showcasing the dedicated efforts of the Chinese path to modernisation. It was a presentation that combined Eastern aesthetics and a viewpoint that can connect with a global audience and expresses the country's good will and aim of building a community with a shared future through an interplay of Chinese style and Asian appeal.

The spectacular opening ceremony blended the power of technology and beauty of art in China. (Detailed report Page 11)

Conflicts, coups, chaos are surging, warns UN chief

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 23 (AP)

AT THE annual meeting of world leaders last year, the UN chief sounded a global alarm about the survival of humanity and the planet. This year, the alarm rang louder and more ominously, and the message was even more pressing: Wake up and take action - right now.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' assessment, delivered in his no-nonsense style, aimed to shock.

We are becoming "unhinged," he said. We are inching closer to "a great fracture." Conflicts, coups and

chaos are surging. The climate crisis is growing. Divides are deepening between military and economic powers, the richer North and poorer South, East and West. "A new Rubicon" has been crossed in artificial intelligence.

Guterres has spoken often on all these issues. But this year, which he called "a time of chaotic transition," his address to leaders was tougher and even more urgent. And looking at his previous state-of-the-world speeches, it seems clear he has been headed in this direction for quite some time.

In his first address in 2017

after taking the helm of the 193-member United Nations, Guterres cited "nuclear peril" as the leading global threat.

Two years later, he was warning of the world splitting in two, with the United States and China creating rival internets, currency, trade, financial rules "and their own zero-sum geopolitical and military strategies." He urged vigorous action "to avert the great fracture."

Then came the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. The global response Guterres called for never happened; richer countries got vaccines and poorer ones were left waiting.

Zelenskyy speaks to Canadian Parli: seeks support for Ukraine

TORONTO, Sept 23 (AP)

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Canada on Friday to stay with his country to victory as he went to the Canadian Parliament seeking to bolster support from Western allies for Ukraine's war against the Russian invasion.

Zelenskyy flew into Canada's capital late on Thursday after meetings with President Joe Biden and lawmakers in Washington. He spoke at the United Nations' annual meeting on Wednesday.

"Moscow must lose once and for all. And it will lose," Zelenskyy said during his address in Parliament.

Zelenskyy said Canada has



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, centre left, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, centre right, greet supporters after a rally at the Fort York Armoury in Toronto on Friday. (AP/PTI)

always been on the "bright side of history" in fighting previous wars and said it has helped saved thousands of lives in this war with aid.

He also thanked Canadians for financial support and for making Ukrainians fleeing war feel at home in Canada.

Zelenskyy repeatedly thanked Canada and received a number of standing ovations from dignitaries and parliamentarians.

"I have a lot of warm words and thanks from Ukraine to you," Zelenskyy said in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's office before his speech. "You have helped us on the battlefield, financially and with humanitarian aid... Stay with us to our victory."