

Nepal floods toll hits 669; rescue opson

KATHMANDU: The death toll from flash floods in Nepal rose to 669 on Saturday, with bodies continuing to be recovered as search and rescue operations pressed ahead amid renewed rainfall, rising water levels and fears of further flooding in the Bhotekoshi River basin.

Nearly 2,400 people remained missing, including at least 320 foreign nationals, while more than 4,400 people have been rescued or evacuated so far as rescuers race against time to reach remote settlements cut off by the destruction of roads and bridges.

Officials further said that the rescued ones included at least 261 foreign tourists who went "out of contact". Of them, 167 were Indians, 40 Chinese, eight Ukrainians, four each from Germany and Malta, three from the US, and the rest were from **► P11**

Probe transferred to CB in Minor's Rape-Death Case

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JAMMU: Probe into the rape and subsequent death of a 15-year-old girl in Kishtwar district has been handed over to the Crime Branch, officials said on Saturday.

The teenager had been allegedly raped by her school teacher over several months. She died on August 20 during a pregnancy termination procedure.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the police has so far arrested six persons in connection with the case, including the alleged rapist teacher and a nurse.

The case transfer to the Crime Branch comes amid demands for a prompt and comprehensive investigation and strict action against the guilty.

Times Square lights up with RSS chief's images

NEW YORK: Images of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat were projected on billboards in the heart of Times Square ahead of his address to members of the Indian diaspora at Madison Square Garden here.

Bhagwat arrived in the US on Tuesday as part of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) centenary-year global outreach programme. His outreach tour also includes Canada and the UK.

In the US, he is scheduled to address a gathering of around 5,000 people at the iconic Madison Square Garden on Saturday.

The event, titled 'Universal Oneness Celebration', is organised by American Hindus for Engagement and Dialogue (AHEAD).

The organisation has described the event as a "landmark Raksha Bandhan gathering". **► P11**

LG inaugurates CII J&K Health Conclave AIIMS, medical colleges mark UT's health sector leap: Sinha

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SRINAGAR: The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha inaugurated the 3rd edition of the CII Jammu & Kashmir Health Conclave on Saturday. The Lieutenant Governor emphasised the transformative vision of "Health Services Anytime, Anywhere" and highlighted the role of innovation, resilience and inclusive growth in shaping the future of healthcare.

Extending best wishes to Ujala Cygnus for its new initiative, the "Peace and Wellbeing Foundation," the Lieutenant Governor noted that the conclave is a platform for

discussion and a collective opportunity to redefine healthcare delivery in Jammu Kashmir and other states.

Citing the example of an ASHA worker using teleconsultation to connect patients in remote villages with district hospitals, the Lieutenant Governor said that telemedicine is

Looking to advance India's vision for region free from terror: PM ahead of SCO Summit Modi arrives in Uzbekistan on 2-day visit

NEW DELHI/ TASHKENT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday left for a two-nation visit to Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic to attend the SCO summit, saying he looked forward to advancing India's vision for the organisation and working with fellow members for a region free from the scourge of terrorism.

Modi, who will first visit Uzbekistan (August 29-30) and then attend the summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic (August 30-September 1), also said he was confident that his tour will strengthen India's strategic partnerships in Central Asia and deepen the civilisational connect with the region.

In his departure statement, Modi said the trip will advance the shared pursuit of peace, stability and prosper-



ity, values that lie at the heart of India's engagement with the world.

"India has been an active and constructive member of the SCO since 2017. I look forward to advancing India's vision for the region, anchored in Security, Connectivity and Opportunity, and to working with fellow members for a region free from the scourge of terrorism, separatism and extremism, which continue to **► P11**

Back on Track: Budgam-Katra service restarts

JAMMU: The train service between Budgam in central Kashmir and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra (SVDK) in the Jammu division resumed on Saturday after being suspended for nearly two months due to the Shri Amarnathji Yatra, bringing relief to commuters, an official said.

The train service from both sides had been suspended from June 29, ahead of the commencement of the 57-day-long annual pilgrimage to the holy cave shrine of Shri Amarnathji, located at an elevation of 3,880 metres in the Valley. The pilgrimage concluded on Friday, coinciding with Raksha **► P11**

MoS lays foundation of Rs 1,503 Cr PMGSY roads Udhampur among country's top 3 dists in road projects: Dr Jitendra

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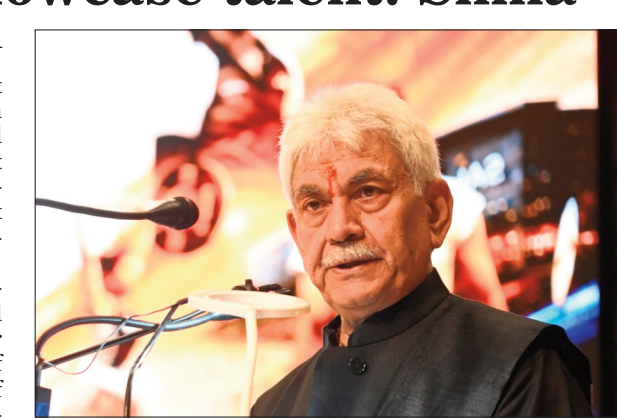
JAMMU: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh on Saturday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving the highest priority to the Udhampur-Kathua-Doda Parliamentary constituency over the last 12 years, particularly during the last five years, resulting in sustained expansion of road connectivity across some of the most re-



mote and difficult hilly areas of the region.

He said that Udhampur has consistently figured among the country's top

Lt Guv attends National Sports Day event J-K must aim for global sporting events, showcase talent: Sinha



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said Jammu and Kashmir should aspire not only to participate in international sporting events but also to host them and showcase its talent to the world.

The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha also paid solemn tribute to Major Dhyan Chand, the wizard of hockey, on the occasion of National Sports Day. Recalling his legendary performance, the Lieutenant Governor described Major Dhyan Chand as one of India's deepest and most enduring symbols, whose brilliance compelled the world to pause and acknowledge India's immense sporting talent.

In his address on the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor observed that every stroke of Major Dhyan Chand's hockey stick symbolised discipline, dedication, and willpower. He emphasised that sports are not merely about medals but about cultivating resilience, unity, and the spirit of nation-building.

"Sport is life's most honest teacher. The playing field never lies; rather, it tells you precisely where you stand today and what you must do to become better tomorrow. There are no shortcuts in sports. Even on the hockey turf, there is no place for excuses. There is only hard work, opportunity, and a test

of your character.

Sports cultivate the fundamental strength of nation-building that society needs. Sports produce young people who know how to fall and then rise again to hoist the flag of victory. Sports nurture the spirit and sentiment that teach us to believe in shared triumph," he said.

Highlighting the role of youth, the Lieutenant Governor said that sports give wings to dreams. He expressed confidence **► P11**

POONCG: A drone suspected to be from Pakistan was spotted hovering over forward areas along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district, prompting security forces to launch a search operation in the area early Saturday, officials said.

The drone was noticed at Balakote area's Behrooti village in Mendhar sector late Friday evening, and it moved towards the Mangalnar-Dabrote side near the border before returning to Pakistan, the officials said.

They said Army troops guarding the LoC intensified surveillance and **► P11**

Red Fort Blast: Court takes cognisance of chargesheet

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Saturday took cognisance of the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) 7,500-page chargesheet against 13 accused in the Red Fort blast case.

The high-intensity Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) blast on November 10 last year killed 11 people and left several injured.

Special Judge Prashant Sharma took cognisance of the agency's chargesheet and posted the matter for further proceedings on September 9.

On May 14 this year, the NIA had filed the chargesheet against 10 accused.

All 10 accused, including main accused Dr Umer Un Nabi (deceased), were linked to Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH), an offshoot of the Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), the chargesheet had said.

The next month, the agency filed a supplementary chargesheet against three more persons, including an absconding paediatrician identified as the founding member of a terror module, for involvement in the blast, taking the number of those charge-sheeted in the case to 13.

The case was registered under provisions **► P11**

Op Sindoor marked shift in India's approach towards Pak: Naravane

VADODARA: Operation Sindoor marked a "very significant shift" in India's approach towards Pakistan as the strikes targeted not only terrorist hideouts near the border but also their supporters deep inside the neighbouring country, former Army chief General M M Naravane said on Saturday.

Speaking to reporters after attending a private event in Vadodara to promote the start-up ecosystem, he said the operation, carried out following the Pahalgam terror attack a year ago, demonstrated that those providing support to terrorists could not escape Indian action regardless of where they were located.

"Operation Sindoor, which took place after the Pahalgam attack, was a very necessary action," said Naravane,



who had served as the 28th Chief of the Army Staff.

Earlier, India's military response had largely been focused on terrorist hideouts located close to the border, he said, referring to earlier terror attacks, including in Uri and Pulwama.

"Previously, whenever such attacks occurred -- like after Uri, and Balakot strikes after Pulwama -- we were mostly targeting terrorist hideouts close to the border.

"But this time, the strikes carried out targeted their supporters and those who provide them backing, wherever they may be -- not just near the Line of Control, **► P11**

Kharge writes to Modi, Shah

NEW DELHI: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to intensify the rescue-and-evacuation efforts for the Indians stranded in flood-hit Nepal and arrange for their safe return home.

The Congress chief has also written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking the deployment of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) wherever required in Nepal to support the rescue-evacuation-and-relief operations.

He has hoped that the government would treat this humanitarian crisis with the urgency and sensitivity it deserves, **► P11**

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