

Sikkim flash flood toll rises to 38, bodies found in Bengal, B'desh

78 Still Missing, 4 Armymen Among Dead

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The human toll in Wednesday's glacial lake outburst flood caused by the high-altitude South Lho-

► **Ham radio operators led out stranded tourists, P 5**

nak reservoir in North Sikkim imploding into a giant cascade down the Teesta basin soared to 38 on Thursday, including four of the 22 Army personnel reported missing since the catastrophe.

At least 78 people were still to be traced more than 24 hours after the flash flood coursed through several dis-



Army trucks buried in mud in the aftermath of the flash floods triggered by Wednesday's cloudburst in North Sikkim

tricts, raising fears of more casualties as the clock ticks away. The Army, whose camps in the region suffered extensive damage in the flash flood early Wednesday, hasn't officially confirmed if any of its missing personnel are among the dead.

Most of the bodies were found downstream of the Tees-

ta at places in neighbouring Bengal like Gajoldoba, Mainaguri and Kotwali in Jalpaiguri; Kuchlibari and Haldibari in Cooch Behar; and Milanpalli and the Teesta barrage in Siliguri. A few floating bodies were also retrieved from Galibandha in Bangladesh.

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Dam, bridge washed away at hydro project

The dam of India's second biggest run-of-the-river hydropower project and Sikkim's biggest — the 1,200 MW Sikkim Urja or Teesta Urja — and a connecting bridge were swept away by the flash floods on Wednesday. The hydropower project was built at a cost of Rs 25,000 crore. **P 5**

Washed-up mortar explodes, boy dies

An 8-year-old boy died and five others were injured as a mortar they had collected from the banks of the Teesta detonated in their home in Jalpaiguri on Thursday. Authorities suspect the mortar was part of ordnance that may have drifted downstream. **P 5**

Climate change causing infra sector loss of \$850bn a year globally: Report

'70% Of Loss Tied To Climate-Related Disasters Like Cyclones, Floods, Storms'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Climate change has led to an annual average global loss in infrastructure sector to the tune of \$850 billion, implying that 14% of the 2021-22 GDP growth is at risk, according to a report released by New Delhi-based Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

The first of its kind report released puts in perspective problems faced by the Global South and its poor infrastructure governance.

The biennial report has estimated that about 67% of the global value of infrastructure assets is concentrated in high-income countries. The upper and lower middle-income countries account for 25% and 7%, respectively while they carry the highest relative risk with an average annual loss estimated at 0.4%, compared to 0.1% in high income countries.

The report has come out



Rescuers remove mud and debris as they search for people trapped after a landslide on the outskirts of Shimla in this August 14 photo. The CDRI report says high-income countries could witness an increase in annual loss by 11% due to climate change, but this figure could increase to 22% in middle-income and 33% in low-income countries

with the first-ever publicly available fully probabilistic risk model — Global Infrastructure Risk Model and Resilience Index (GIRI) — quantifying the average annual losses due to disasters.

The report has analysed nine infrastructure sectors

and says to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs), nations need to invest \$9.2 trillion annually in resilient infrastructure till 2050, of which \$2.9 trillion is required in developing countries alone, including India.

Amit Prothi, the director

general of CDRI, said "the report puts CDRI on the global map with 20 global partners bringing together a unique body of evidence to unpack the 'resilience dividend' making a compelling economic, political, and financial case to radically upscale investment in infrastructure."

This is the first Global South-driven report that will influence national policies and infrastructure governance, said Kamal Kishore, member of the National Disaster Management Authority and co-chair of the executive committee of CDRI.

The report says high-income countries could witness an increase in annual loss by 11% due to climate change but this figure could increase to 22% in middle-income and 33% in low-income countries.

Andrew Maskrey, coordinating author of the report who had been associated with the UN's Global Assessment Reports on DRR brought out by

the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, has emphasised on nature-based infrastructure solutions (NbIS) as a novel and pragmatic approach for infrastructure resilience and strategies that effectively transform risk into resilience.

"Governments can use this report to understand the risk they face, and to realize that it is critical to ensure that all future infrastructure is fully resilient," Maskrey said.

While average annual infrastructure loss of 30% is associated with hazards like earthquakes & tsunamis, around 70% is associated with climate-related disasters like cyclones, floods, storms etc.

It has been estimated that about 80% of the risk is concentrated in the power, transport, and telecommunications sectors where asset building only accounts for 15-30% of overall expenditure over its design lifecycle while up to 70-85% is attributable to operation and management.

More needs to be done to reach Paris goal: UN report

'Pre-2020 Climate Action Has Been Insufficient'

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New Delhi: Countries, including India, may have divergent views on the details of how to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change but they have expressed broad agreement that "more action by all nations and support for developing countries is needed to limit global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius" as the pre-2020 climate action has been insufficient, noted a new synthesis report of the UN climate body.

Released late Wednesday night, the report also endorsed the G20 leaders' commitment under the New Delhi declaration to work for reducing global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 43% from 2019 levels by 2030, and facilitate commitment towards global peaking of emissions at the earliest and by 2025, and reach net zero CO2 emissions by 2050.

It noted that many countries emphasised that the nationally determined contributions (NDCs)—climate ac-

EARTH IS WARMING AT ALARMING RATE

How much GHG emission needs to be cut to keep the warming limit to 1.5 degrees C

Cut emissions from 2019 levels (%)



➤ Earth's global average surface temp. in 2011-2020 was around 1.1 degrees C higher than the pre-industrial average (1850-1900)

➤ Implementation of all current long-term net zero targets will increase the warming to 1.7 - 2.1 degrees C by 2100

tions — should collectively reflect the ambition required to limit warming to 1.5 degree celsius by end of the century.

The earth's global average surface temperatures already reached around 1.1 degrees C higher than the pre-industrial average (1850-1900) whereas a minimum 1.7 degree C increase in warming is predicted at the current level of NDCs.

"The report is again telling us that the world is off-track. COP28 is the moment for all Parties (countries) to come together and put actionable solutions on the table. We must be ready with real answers to tackle the challenges, eradicate 22 gigatons

of emissions by 2030, strengthen global resilience and mobilise finance at the scale necessary to enable a just and equitable transition. Now is the time to unite, act, and deliver a strong negotiated outcome on the global stocktake," said Sultan Al Jaber, COP28 president-designate.

The synthesis report is designed to help governments reach a decision on the global stocktake at 28th session of COP28 in Dubai in December. The report includes the views of almost all countries, including India, submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as of October 2.

3m Indians at risk of Sikkim-like disaster: International study

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New Delhi: The Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) that led to disaster in Sikkim may just be an indication of the danger such an event poses to the lives of three million Indians living in vulnerable areas of the six Himalayan states/UTs — J&K, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

The first global assessment of such areas, done by an international team led by scientists at UK's Newcastle University, flagged in February that India and Pakistan together make up one-third of the total number of people globally exposed to such GLOFs. The study, published in the journal Nature Communications, also underlined that the population exposed to GLOFs increases with distance from a glacial lake.

GLOFs occur when either a natural dam containing a glacial lake bursts or when the lake's level suddenly increases and overflows its banks, leading to catastrophic downstream destruction.

The Himalayan ranges are host to 7,500 glacial lakes. Of these, Sikkim has about 10%, of which nearly 25 are assessed to be at-risk. India's Glacial Lake Atlas of Ganga river basin shows a total of 4,707 glacial lakes have been mapped from their origin to foothills of Himalayas covering a catchment area of nearly 2.5sqkm.

These figures show the vulnerability of the people living downstream, specifically when climate change due to increasing global average temperatures make the glacial lakes prone to outburst.

"Flash floods in the Himalayas are increasingly linked to climate change. Rising temperatures lead to the melting of glaciers, which store vast amounts of water. When these glaciers melt rapidly, it results in glacial lake outbursts and heavy rainfall, exacerbating the risk of flash floods in the region, as seen in Sikkim," said Anjal

Dam, bridge washed away at hydro project

The dam of India's second biggest run-of-the-river hydropower project — the 1,200 MW Sikkim Urja or Teesta Urja — and a connecting bridge were swept away by flash floods caused by a breach in Lhonak lake in north-west Sikkim on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday, reports **Roshan Gupta**. Sikkim's biggest project on the Teesta, was built in the Chungthang area of Mangan district at a staggering cost of Rs 25,000 crore.

However, there was a silver lining as the Teesta Low Dam Project Stage IV at Kalijhora remained unscathed, thanks to the timely opening of seven gates. "At 11.58pm on Tuesday, the ITBP informed us about the disaster. Our team rushed to open the gates, but the floodwaters breached the dam before they could reach it. Fourteen members of our team were rescued by 2am on Wednesday," Sunil Saraogi, executive chairman of Sikkim Urja Limited, said on Thursday.

Saraogi said the project commissioned in 2017 had finally started turning a profit since last year. Shankar Sharma, civil supervisor of the project, said: "I immediately alerted the villagers. No injuries were reported."

Prakash, clinical associate professor at Bharti Institute of Public Policy, ISB, Hyderabad.

He said the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports have consistently warned of the Himalayan region's vulnerability to climate change impacts, including the heightened risk of flash floods due to glacier melt and changing rainfall patterns. "These reports emphasise the urgent need for climate action to mitigate these risks and protect vulnerable communities in the region," said Prakash who as a scientist also contributed to the IPCC reports.

India reclaim hockey Gold, qualify for Paris Olympics

HANGZHOU, Oct 6 (PTI)

SKIPPER Harmanpreet Singh led admirably as the Indian men's hockey team mauled defending champions Japan 5-1 to reclaim the Asian Games Gold, their fourth in the continental showpiece, after nine years and qualify for next year's Paris Olympics here on Friday.

The Indians, who had to be content with a Bronze medal in the last edition in Jakarta, thus won their fourth Asian Games Gold and first since the 2014 Incheon edition.

India's other Gold medals came in



Gold medallist Indian players with team officials pose for photos during the presentation ceremony of the men's hockey event at the 19th Asian Games, in Hangzhou, China on Friday. (PTI)

1966 and 1998, both times in Bangkok. South Korea won the Bronze medal (Contd on page 5)

China seeks to gain control over media in Pak: US report

Washington: China has developed a web of international operations to have a say over media narratives and seeks to gain significant control over the Pakistani media, an official US report has said. In addition to working closely with Russia in the information space, China has attempted to enlist other close partners to counter unfavourable narratives, the US state department said in its report.

Prominent among them is Pakistan, it said. "With Pakistan, Beijing has sought to deepen cooperation on 'combating disinformation', including under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Media Forum," said the report. Beijing and Islamabad use the forum to address what they view as "malicious disinformation" and have launched initiatives like the "CPEC Rapid Response Information Network" and, most recently, pledged to launch the China-Pa-

Imran seeks graft conviction suspended

In a bid to overturn his disqualification from electoral politics, Imran Khan on Thursday challenged the trial court's verdict in the Toshakhana case, linked to concealing details of state gifts, in the Islamabad high court, reports **Omer Farooq Khan**. On August 5, a trial court had found Imran guilty of "corrupt practices". His 3-year sentence was suspended on Aug 28. In the plea, Imran contended that the HC had only suspended his sentence and not the order barring him from participation in elections.

kistan Media Corridor, it said. In its report, the state department alleged China spends billions of dollars annually on foreign information manipulation efforts and uses false or biased information to promote positive views of China. PTI

Iran's Narges Mohammadi wins Nobel Peace Prize

OSLO, Oct 6 (AP)

IMPRISONED Iranian activist Narges Mohammadi won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday in recognition of her tireless campaigning for women's rights and democracy and against the death penalty.

Mohammadi, 51, has kept up her activism despite numerous arrests by Iranian authorities and spending years behind bars. "This prize is first and foremost a recognition of the very important work of a whole movement in Iran with its undisputed leader, Narges Mohammadi," said



Berit Reiss-Andersen, the chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee who announced the prize in Oslo.

She said the committee hopes the prize "is an encouragement to continue the work in whichever form this movement finds to be fitting." She also urged Iran to release Mohammadi in time for the prize ceremony on December 10.

For nearly all of Mohammadi's life, Iran has been governed by a Shiite theocracy headed by the country's supreme leader. While women hold jobs,

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