

WORLD

Eight Indian tourists die in Nepal after lighting gas heater in hotel

- The tourists were found unconscious in the room of their resort
- They were pronounced brought dead on arrival by hospital
- The police say the tourists could have died due to suffocation

Agencies | Kathmandu

Eight Indian tourists including four children died of suspected suffocation in a hotel in Nepal on Tuesday, police said, after trying to keep warm by using a gas heater during the night.

The victims were staying in Daman, a hill resort south of Kathmandu which is known for its panoramic views of the Himalayas.

"They had lit a gas heater to keep the room warm and probably suffocated," police official Hobindra Bogati said. Seven other tourists in the group were unharmed.

The tourists were found unconscious in the room of their resort and were airlifted to HAMS Hospital in Kathmandu where they were pronounced brought dead on arrival.

Foreign minister S Jaishankar said that he is deeply distressed by tragic news. "Our embassy in Nepal has been closely following the situation. Embassy officials are stationed at the hospital and providing necessary assistance. Our thoughts are with bereaved families," he said yesterday.

The police say the tourists could have died due to suffo-



The victims were identified as Ranjith Kumar Adatholath Punathil, Indu Lakshmi Peethambaran Ragalatha, Vyshnav Ranjith, Praveen Krishnan Nair, Saranya Sasi, Sreebhadra Praveen, Aarcha Praveen and Abhinav Saranya Nair. (Courtesy of mathrubhumi)



This undated image shows the cottages of Everest Panorama Resort in Daman, Thaha Municipality, Makawanpur District. Photo courtesy: hotels.com | Himalayan Times

cation. "They were using gas heater in the room, suffocation might have caused their death," Superintendent of Police Sushil Singh Rathore said.

According to news agency PTI, the group of tourists was coming back from Pokhara and stayed at Everest Panorama Resort in Makwanpur district on Monday night.

The resort manager said that the guests stayed in a room and turned on a gas heater to keep

themselves warm, according to PTI. Although they had booked four rooms, eight of them stayed in a room and remaining others in another room, the manager said, adding that all the windows and the door of the room were bolted from inside.

PTI identified the victims as Praveen Krishnan Nair, Saranya Sasi, Sreebhadra Praveen, Aarcha Praveen, Abhinav Saranya Nair, Ranjith Kumar Adatholath Punathil, Indu Lakshmi Peeth-



Hospital staff observe as the bodies of eight Indian tourists who died due to suspected suffocation are carried inside an ambulance while being taken for postmortem in Kathmandu, Nepal



The body of a child who is among the victims is being carried inside an ambulance

ambaran Ragalatha and Vyshnav Ranjith.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan condoled the death of Malayali tourists in Nepal.

On the directions of the chief minister, officials have taken steps to expedite procedures for the repatriation of the mortal remains of the victims, his office said.

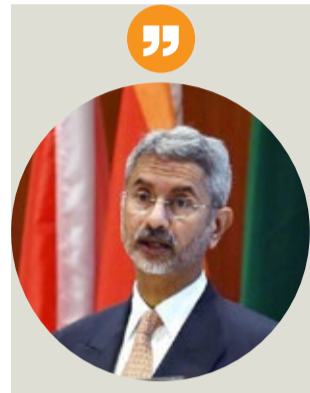
Tourism is a major source of revenue for Nepal's economy, providing hundreds of thousands of jobs. Last year just

over 1 million tourists visited the country, of which the biggest contingent - around a tenth - came from India.

Two Chinese and two Italian tourists were found dead in two separate incidents in Nepal in 2013.

Several people die during winter in Kathmandu due to carbon monoxide poisoning, which is caused by poor ventilation and lack of oxygen, according to Buddha Basnyat, a doctor writing in the *Nepali Times*.

They had lit a gas heater to keep the room warm and probably suffocated
POLICE OFFICIAL HOBINDRA BOGATI



Deeply distressed by the tragic news of the passing away of eight Indian tourists in Nepal. Our Embassy has been closely following the situation. Embassy officials are stationed at the hospital and are providing necessary assistance. Our thoughts are with the bereaved families

INDIAN MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan condoled the death of Malayali tourists in Nepal



Iran MP offers \$3 mn 'to anyone who kills Trump'

Tehran

An Iranian lawmaker yesterday offered a \$3-million reward to "anyone who kills" US President Donald Trump to avenge the assassination of a top general, semi-official news agency ISNA reported.

Ahmad Hamzeh, a little-known member of the Majlis, made the offer on behalf of the people of Kerman, the hometown and final resting place of storied commander Major General Qasem Soleimani.

"We will give \$3 million to anyone who kills Trump," Hamzeh, who represents Kahanouj county near the southeastern city of Kerman, was quoted as saying by ISNA.

He did not say who would pay



Public opposition to Washington already ran high in Iran even before a US drone strike killed storied Revolutionary Guards commander Major General Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad earlier this month

the bounty offer, which comes a month ahead of a parliamentary election.

Soleimani, one of the most

popular public figures in Iran, was killed on January 3 in US drone strike outside Baghdad airport.

China's former Interpol chief sentenced to 13 years in prison

Beijing

Former Interpol chief Meng Hongwei, who was detained on a visit to China in 2018, was sentenced Tuesday to more than 13 years in prison for bribery in a case that shook the international police organisation.

Meng -- a former vice minister of public security -- is among a growing group of Communist Party cadres caught in President Xi Jinping's anti-graft campaign, which critics say has also served as a way to remove the leader's political enemies.

He vanished during a visit to China from France, where Interpol is based, and was later accused of accepting bribes and expelled from the Communist Party.

His wife was granted political asylum in France last year,



Former Interpol chief Meng Hongwei

after saying she was afraid she and her two children would be the targets of kidnapping attempts.

The 66-year-old was sentenced to 13 years and six months in prison and fined two million yuan RMB (\$290,000), said the Tianjin First Intermediate People's Court on Tuesday.

At his trial last June, Meng pleaded guilty to accepting \$2.1 million in bribes, after the court said he used his status and positions to "seek improper benefit", illegally acquire property and accumulate bribes.

Greta says planting not enough after Trump backs trillion tree plan

Reuters | Davos, Switzerland

Greta Thunberg said planting trees was not enough to address climate change on Tuesday, in an apparent rebuke to a planting pledge in Davos by US President Donald Trump.

"Our house is still on fire," Thunberg said, repeating her remarks at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum a year ago. "Your inaction is fuelling the flames," the teenage activist added, in the latest to-and-fro with the 73-year-old president.

Earlier, Thunberg called on world leaders to listen to young activists, who have followed her to Davos this year.