



A Turkish woman, left, crying for her child who in the ruins of the collapsed school is comforted by a friend in Celtiksuyu, Bingol, yesterday. Rescue workers, right, search the rubble of a boarding school's dormitory where students are trapped in Celtiksuyu. Up to 150 people, including sleeping children, were killed and scores more trapped under rubble when a powerful earthquake jolted eastern Turkey early Thursday, flattening the dormitory.



PHOTO: AFP

Chinese sub accident kills 70 on board

REUTERS, Beijing

An accident on board a Chinese conventional submarine has killed all of its 70 officers and crew, the official Xinhua news agency said yesterday.

The accident, which occurred in Chinese territorial waters in recent days, was caused by mechanical problems during training, Xinhua said but gave no further details or a date.

It was one of the worst naval accidents in Communist China's history, a military source said.

"Unfortunately, all 70 men and officers aboard the submarine died," Xinhua said. The submarine has been towed to an unidentified port, Xinhua added.

In the mid-1980s, a destroyer exploded near the southern island province of Hainan killing nearly 100 people.

The Central Military Commission sent its condolences to families of officers and crew, it said.

The 2.5 million-strong People's Liberation Army has a fleet of about 90 submarines.

Turkish tremor kills 150

Scores of school children buried under rubbles

REUTERS, Bingol

Turkish rescue workers dug into the wreckage of a school dormitory yesterday, searching for scores of children buried under rubble by a powerful earthquake that struck southeastern Turkey and killed up to 150.

Working through the night under floodlights to the rumble of generators, military and civil defense rescue teams slowly hacked through the crumpled concrete that was a four-story dormitory for poor students from remote villages.

Anxious relatives lit fires nearby

to keep warm against the chilly night, 24 hours after the quake struck.

"We have taken a lot of students alive out of the ruins, it is very probable there are others still alive, that is why we are working meticulously," said Major Oguz Tozak as the sun rose over the rubble.

He said rescuers suspected some 50-70 children remained unaccounted for in the collapsed building. "We will continue to work until we get all the students out," he said.

Yusuf Katkay was one of six children rescued overnight.

"They were working and they came to me, and I understood they were going to take me out. They dug and opened one hole. They gave me water and then they took me out," he told Reuters in the nearby hospital tent.

But alongside the living, rescuers also extracted bodies. The state-run Anatolian news agency said 35 children's bodies and one dead teacher had been found.

"We rushed here and we saw how right we were to be worried. I haven't seen my son and I have no idea if he's alive or dead. All I want to do is see him," Halis Agadag said.

The earthquake, measuring 6.4

on the Richter scale, struck early on Thursday morning, catching most asleep.

Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said the confirmed death toll for the whole quake region was nearly 100 and officials feared it could reach 150.

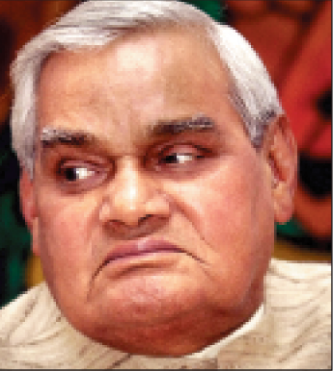
The earthquake crushed buildings in the city of Bingol as well as outlying towns in the mainly Kurdish province.

A major earthquake last hit Bingol in 1971, killing about 900 people.

Two major quakes hit the north

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India to restore diplomatic ties with Pakistan: Vajpayee



Musharraf sees a new beginning

AFP, New Delhi

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, in another surprise peace gesture, announced yesterday India would re-establish full diplomatic ties with Pakistan and restore air links.

But in an address to parliament, Vajpayee rejected Islamabad's call for international mediation to resolve the bitter dispute over Kashmir.

Vajpayee, breaking his silence four days after telephone talks with his Pakistani counterpart Zafarullah Jamali, gave a clear signal of India's first steps in 18 months towards normalization of ties with its nuclear enemy.

"It has been decided to appoint a high commissioner to Pakistan and to restore civil aviation links on a reciprocal basis," Vajpayee told the lower house of parliament in a

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JS quorum crisis costs over Tk 2cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over Tk 2.35 crore has been wasted owing to lack of quorum in the last three parliamentary sessions, according to Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

The three sessions cost the parliament a total of Tk 11,48,39,250 at the rate of Tk 15,000 per minute to keep the parliament building operative, a TIB research on "parliament watch" released yesterday said.

The lost time, owing to quorum crisis and late resumption of

parliamentary sessions, accounted for 26.15 hours in those sessions and the parliament had to spend an additional Tk 2,35,35,000, it said.

The three sessions -- fourth, fifth and sixth -- were spread over 127 hours 37 minutes and 57 seconds in 38 sittings, none of which began on time.

The parliament spent only 22 hours for legislative business, while unscheduled debates took 11.23 hours. The parliamentarians uttered the names of their leaders at least 493 times during their deliberations.

The TIB made a critical observation on the prime minister's question time. It said the 4th session did not see any PM's question time as there was no Wednesday in its four working days. Of the two PM's question days in the fifth session, parliamentarians availed one. On the other day, questions were tabled.

The main opposition Awami League did not get the opportunity to question the PM in the fifth and sixth sessions. The party boycotted the PM's question-answer sessions, as its questions were not included in the list.

Apart from the questions

tabled, the PM was asked 12 scripted questions in the sixth session and 36 supplementaries, of which the treasury bench put forward 27.

The TIB research covered the notices, bills, resolutions, thanks motions on the presidential address, lack of parliamentary committees, walkouts, private members bills and resolutions and the speaker's role.

It concluded that only proactive relations between the government and the opposition could make the parliament really functional.

Biman's ATP fails to fly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An ATP aircraft of the Biman could not take off for its scheduled flight to Chittagong for technical fault yesterday morning.

Just before take off, the aircraft's engine made a frightening sound and passengers got panicky. The flight did not take off and passengers were off loaded, sources said.

Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas who was on board and the other passengers later flew to Chittagong by another plane.

After two hours of check up, the ATP aircraft left for Iswardi.

Meanwhile, two ATP planes rejoined Biman fleet only last week after remaining inoperative for

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Home minister on RSF list of 'predators'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury ranks on the 'predators' list of 42 prepared by Reporters sans Frontiers (RSF).

Armed Islamic militants from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Kashmir, Pakistan and the Philippines are also on the list of "Predators of Press Freedom".

The "predators" are responsible for attacks against press freedom, the RSF said in its scathing annual report, released to coincide with the 13th World Press Freedom Day today.

Alexander Lukashenko, president of Belarus, and François

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