

Builders under fire for Gujarat quake losses

AFP, Ahmedabad

As the death toll soared from the earthquake which ravaged the Indian state of Gujarat, anger mounted Tuesday against builders whose poor construction and cost-cutting were being blamed for the heavy losses.

establish that the loss would have been far less if civil authorities had done their duty and unscrupulous builders had been forced to curb their greed.

Disaster management experts expressed hope that the recommendations of a two-year-old experts' report on making high-rise and other buildings quake-proof may finally be implemented by state governments.

said Bhupendra Moharwala, a senior partner of Bakeri Associates. "We have been in this field for 40 years. There are many new builders who are coming into our trade now who have hardly any experience. They are just looking for quick profits."

Protesters torch Pak daily for 'blasphemy'

AFP, Peshawar

A frenzied mob Tuesday torched the printing press of a local English-language daily for publishing blasphemous remarks against the prophet Muhammad, police and witnesses said.

Annan trying to arrange Arafat-Barak summit

AFP, Gaza City

UN chief Kofi Annan is trying to arrange a summit between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat despite Israel's decision to suspend peacemaking until after the February 6 leadership election, a Palestinian official said Tuesday.

arrange a meeting between the two leaders, who have not met face to face since the outbreak of deadly violence in the region that has cost the lives of almost 390 people, most of them Palestinians.



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (R) meets with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat on Monday in the Egyptian Red Sea Resort of Sharm el-Sheikh. Arafat informed Mubarak of the latest developments in the Palestinian territories, as well as the talks he held at the World Economic Forum (WEF) which opened in Davos, Switzerland on January 25.



Afghan refugees stay outside their makeshift camps to get sun heat in Jalozai refugee camp near Pakistani north west city of Peshawar on Monday. The United Nations is concerned about deportations of Afghan "illegal immigrants" from Pakistan amid an escalating refugee crisis as thousands flee war and drought.

AI urges for a change to torture culture in India

AFP, New Delhi

Amnesty International urged India Tuesday to crack down on the use of torture, which was too often ignored as a "necessary evil" by the government and judicial authorities.

Pinochet ordered to stand trial for mass murder

AFP, Santiago

Chile's former dictator Augusto Pinochet was ordered to stand trial on murder conspiracy and kidnapping charges stemming from a 1973 military campaign to wipe out opposition to his rule.

The latest lawsuit, filed Monday, charged Pinochet was behind the abduction and killings of 93 indigenous Mapuche people. "Shouts of joy from relatives of the victims of alleged human rights abuses erupted in the corridors of the court house as they heard the decision."

'S Asia a concern for Bush admin'

AFP, New Delhi

South Asia will be a concern for the new US administration as long as Indo-Pakistan relations remain frozen, said Shirin Tahir-Kheli, one of the people tipped to become US assistant secretary of state for the region.

economic and trade links between the rivals. She cited a proposed Iran-India-Pakistan gas pipeline as a project that could "change the dynamics of Indo-Pakistan relations."

appointed to replace Karl Inderfurth as assistant secretary of state for South Asia and use her position to tilt US policy towards Pakistan -- started a campaign against her through the media and the Internet.

Lockerbie blast verdict likely today

AFP, Camp Zeist

The Scottish court trying two Libyans charged with the murder of 270 people in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing will announce its verdict on Wednesday.

majority for a conviction. If they consider the evidence too weak for a conviction, they can acquit the defendants. Under Scottish law however, there is a third option open to them: that of "not proven."

Advertisement for Bangladesh Rastani Pratikyakoron Alaka Karpaka. Includes logo, address, and a table with 4 columns: ক্রমিক নং, কাজের নাম, প্রাক্কলিত (টাকায়), ঠিকাদারের যোগ্যতা, কাজ শেষ করিবার তারিখ, দরপত্র দিলে মূল্য (টাকায়), দরপত্র দিলে মূল্য (স্বাক্ষরযোগ্য).

Advertisement for Daka City Corporation (ঢাকা সিটি করপোরেশন). Includes text about water supply and a table with 4 columns: ক্রমিক নং, কাজের বিবরণ, প্রাক্কলিত টাকা, সময়সীমা.

UN concerned at Pak move to deport Afghan refugees

AFP, Jalozai, Pakistan

The United Nations is concerned about deportations of Afghan "illegal immigrants" from Pakistan amid an escalating refugee crisis as thousands flee war and drought, UN officials said.

new sites for refugees in Pakistan, as conditions at Jalozai deteriorate rapidly and children die of exposure during the cold winter nights. "We have to do something very quickly to prevent a major humanitarian disaster," he said after a tour of this poorly equipped camp near the city of Peshawar, North West Frontier Province.