

Swedes tops the list of foreign casualties

AFP, Stockholm

A total of 60 Swedes have been identified among the dead and 3,500 are missing after the massive earthquake and tidal waves that slammed the Indian Ocean coastlines, the foreign ministry said on Friday.

"Yes, we have identified 60 dead and there are 3,500 missing," ministry spokesman Daniel Emilsson told AFP.

Swedish Prime Minister Goeran Persson had on Thursday warned that the Swedish fatalities were "going to end up in the hundreds, in the worst-case scenario exceed 1,000."

The large majority of the Swedes confirmed dead were holidaying in southern Thailand.

Sweden looks likely to be one of the Western countries hardest-hit by the catastrophe.

Persson has previously called the catastrophe "probably the worst of our time and will impact everyday Swedish life for a long time to come."

TSUNAMI AFTERMATH

Indonesia announces int'l summit

AFP, Jakarta

Indonesia, the country worst hit by the Asian-wide tsunami disaster, said Friday it would host a major international summit to discuss strategies for overcoming the catastrophe and raising more aid.

The conference in Jakarta, set for January 6, will gather senior officials from countries around the Indonesian ocean which have counted tens of thousands of deaths as seismic shockwaves buried their coastlines in water.

Jakarta also hopes United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan will attend.

"The meeting will be to discuss the handling of the impact of the earthquake and the tsunami," Indonesia's Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda said. "It is actually

a form of humanitarian solidarity for the international community."

Senior officials from India and Sri Lanka, which have both suffered massive casualties and damage, were invited to attend the conference as well as all 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Major aid donors Australia, New Zealand, the United States, China, Japan, and South Korea were also invited to the event which will attempt to generate more offers of assistance and formulate an action plan to revive the region.

Representatives from the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Health Organisation, Asian Development Bank and European Union are also on the guest list.

So far only Vietnam has con-

firmed it would be present, sending one of its three deputy premiers. India said its attendance was under "active consideration".

Wirayuda said the meeting, chaired by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, would "forge a joint commitment to encourage concrete action" for rehabilitating and reconstructing areas hit by the disaster.

The foreign minister said it was not intended to be a full-blown global summit, but a regional attempt to address the crisis, with input from a few outside nations.

"It is true that this not aimed at being a full international conference but a more limited one, as this is an initiative, a response or a reaction from the community in the region," he said.



An elderly Indonesian woman stands in front of her damaged house six days after huge waves caused by a powerful earthquake took all from her, in Banda Aceh yesterday.

Man found alive after five days under rubble in Indonesia

AFP, Jakarta

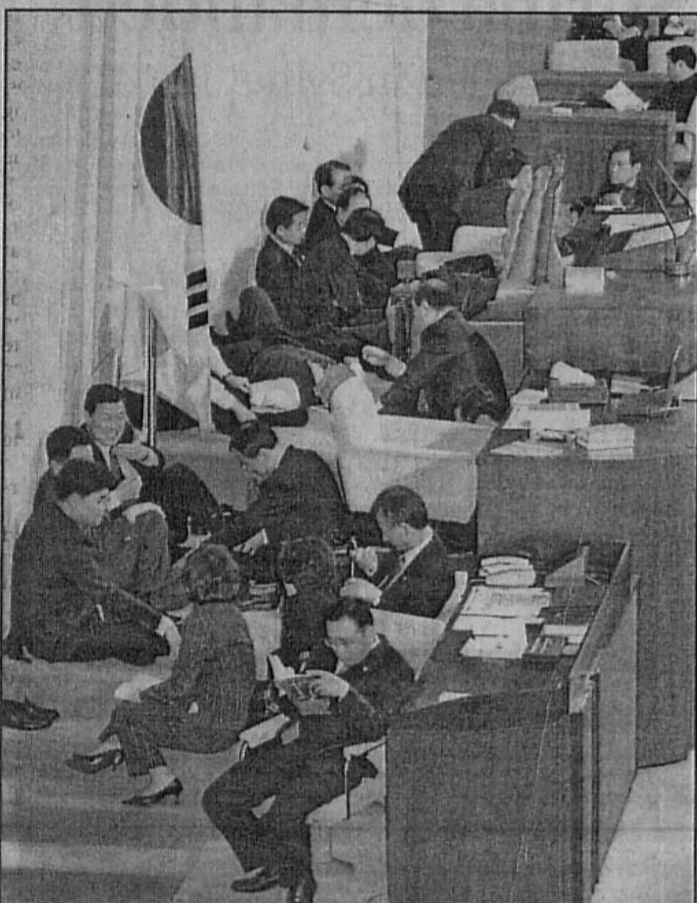
A man has been pulled alive from the rubble in Indonesia's Banda Aceh city five days after a powerful earthquake and tsunami caused massive destruction, reports said Friday.

Ichsan Azmi, 27, was found alive by a search-and-rescue team in the city where tens of thousands were killed by the world's worst disaster in living memory, Metro TV reported.

Television pictures showed Azmi looking relatively healthy despite open wounds to his legs and arms.

He had not eaten or drunk anything for the past five days, the report said.

He reportedly told his rescuers that he had been dragged to the place where he was found when tides struck his home two kilometers away.



Ukraine court rejects PM's complaints

REUTERS, Kiev

Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich's bid to overturn his liberal rival's victory in a presidential election lay in tatters on Thursday after Ukraine's Supreme Court threw out his complaints.

With West-leaning Viktor Yushchenko already discussing his post-election program, Yanukovich suffered a further blow when the Central Election Commission threw out his objections about voting irregularities.

Yet he has refused to bow to opponents' demands to quit. Although Yushchenko holds a lead of about eight percentage points in the preliminary count, a Yanukovich

aide said new legal challenges were planned once the poll's result is officially published.

The United States said it hoped matters would be resolved quickly so that Ukrainians could get on with their lives.

Supreme Court spokeswoman Lianna Shlyaposhnikova said judges had now rejected all four complaints submitted by Yanukovich's team concerning the organization of last Sunday's re-run of the Nov. 21 poll, which had been rigged in Yanukovich's favor.

"The last complaint will not be considered. All four complaints were rejected," she said, adding that two were filed too late and two were not clearly drawn up.

Formation of Israeli coalition faces hitch

AFP, Jerusalem

The formation of a new Israeli government, bringing Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's right-wing Likud into a coalition with Labor, could be delayed by the demands of a small ultra-Orthodox party, officials said Friday.

Although the last stumbling block appeared to have been removed Thursday with a deal enabling Labor leader Shimon Peres to become the most senior minister, United Torah Judaism's apparent refusal to come aboard now poses a new challenge.

UTJ said Friday that persistent differences did not allow for its participation in the new government although many in Likud want it as a partner.

Abbas takes election campaign to Gaza

AFP, Gaza City

Three Palestinians were killed as Israel pressed on with an offensive in the Gaza Strip, a bastion of Islamic hardliners where Palestinian presidential favorite Mahmud Abbas was taking his election campaign Friday.

Two fighters from the military wing of Hamas -- the main Islamic radical movement which is boycotting the January 9 election to replace the late Yasser Arafat -- were killed by a rocket fired from an Israeli helicopter at Khan Yunis refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip.

The army said it had fired at three fighters after spotting them laying explosives on a path used by

troops.

Their deaths brought the toll of Israel's operation in the area, which the army says aims to thwart Palestinian rocket and mortar firing at Gaza's settlements, to 11 killed since Wednesday. At least nine were armed militants.

On the Palestinian political front, PLO chief Mahmud Abbas was due in the Gaza Strip on a three-day visit that will see the launch of celebrations commemorating his Fatah party's 40th anniversary and political rallies.

The Gaza Strip is a traditional bastion of Islamist hardliners, including Hamas and its smaller rival Islamic Jihad.

Baghdad oil refinery fire doused

AFP, Baghdad

Iraqi firefighters put out a fire at a crucial oil refinery in Baghdad on Friday after an apparent sabotage that officials warned could have caused a "catastrophe" in the nation's capital, the oil ministry said.

"The firemen succeeded to put the blaze out at 9:30 am (0630 GMT)," said ministry spokesman Assem Jihad. "A catastrophe was averted."

One of the Dura refinery's production units was hit late Thursday in an apparent mortar or rocket attack and Jihad said several firemen were injured fighting the ensuing blaze.

The refinery provides fuel for Baghdad's main power plant, which supplies electricity for most of the capital and outlying areas.

Jihad described the attack as another attempt by insurgents to aggravate the fuel shortage gripping oil-rich Iraq that has cars waiting for hours for gas.

Lawmakers of the main opposition Grand National Party block the place where the chairman of the National Assembly should be yesterday in Seoul. Opposition lawmakers put up a human wall in parliament, delaying approval on the extended deployment of South Korean troops in Iraq. The deadlock delayed votes on the country's budget for 2005 and the government's proposal to extend the deployment of 3,600 South Korean troops in northern Iraq by a year.

World welcomes new year in sombre mood

REUTERS, Sydney

Normally exuberant New Year celebrations were tempered by thoughts for victims of south Asia's tsunami as several major cities canceled parties and Australia led a global minute of silence.

Sydney, the first major city to start New Year celebrations, went ahead with its annual New Year's Eve fireworks displays Friday, but revellers who flocked to the harbourside city center were urged to remember the nearly 124,000 people who died.

The Asian disaster cast a long shadow over global festivities, particularly in Europe.

Sweden, Norway, Finland and Germany planned to fly flags at half-mast to start 2005 as a mark of respect

for their many dead and missing

Paris put black mourning crepe on the trees lining the Champs Elysees to pay homage to the victims. A number of Italian cities abandoned plans for major New Year's Eve parties, opting to send the money saved to charities helping the victims.

Around the world, party plans were dropped or toned down. In Sri Lanka, the plush Hilton Colombo hotel cancelled an end-of-year dance. Thailand called off outdoor celebrations in memory of its 4,500 victims and Malaysia decided against official festivities.

In Singapore, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong called for muted New Year celebrations and a fireworks display over the Marina Bay area was canceled.

Nordic governments under fire for slow response

AFP, Stockholm

Survivors, relatives and emergency experts in the Nordic countries like Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark, have blasted their governments in recent days for failing to respond immediately to the needs of their nationals caught in the tidal waves that struck Indian Ocean coastlines at the weekend.

The vitriol is harshest in Sweden. Swedish media has revealed that after being informed of the tidal waves on Sunday, Foreign Minister Laila Freivalds attended a theatre performance in the evening and did not show up at her office until Monday morning. This while 20,000 to 30,000 Swedish tourists were known to be holidaying in the tsunami-hit region.

In the past five days, her ministry has received thousands of emails expressing rage and frustration. Excerpts read: "Resign", "I'm ashamed of being Swedish", and "Even in times of war we help the victims more rapidly and better than what the ministry has displayed in times of peace".

An online survey of tabloid Expressen's readers on Friday showed that 76 percent of Swedes want Freivalds to resign.

Meanwhile, dozens of relatives are so dissatisfied with the help being offered by the Swedish government that they have taken it upon themselves to travel to Thailand to try to locate their loved ones.

The government in Norway, where at least 21 are confirmed dead, has also come under fire.

According to paper of record Aftenposten, relatives of Norwegian holiday-makers telephoned the foreign ministry dozens of times in the hours following the catastrophe but got no answer.

One Danish survivor living in Phuket, Simon Borre Hansen, meanwhile told local news agency Ritzau that the Danish embassy refused to help him because he didn't have any travel insurance.

In Finland, Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen has faced similar criticisms but has defended his government's actions, saying that it reacted quickly and in concert with other parties.

US replaces memo on torture with new guidelines

REUTERS, Washington

The US Justice Department released a new memo yesterday to replace a controversial document outlining how to avoid violating US and international terror statutes while interrogating prisoners.

In a Dec. 30 memorandum, released early yesterday, the department stepped back from an August 2002 memo that said only the most severe types of torture were not permissible under US and international agreements against torture.

The new memo was more broad in its definition of what could be considered torture, and therefore what was unacceptable under US law and under the United Nations Convention Against Torture.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Barisal
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RHD TENDER CORRIGENDUM NOTICE

RHD, Road Division, Barisal Tender No. 12-BRD/2004-2005 has been invited vide this office Memo No. 4051, dated: 28-11-2004. For unavoidable circumstances last selling, closing & opening date and time of the tender have been shifted as follows:

1. Tender last selling date : 08-01-2005 during office and time hours.
2. Tender closing date and : 10-01-2005 at 12-30 PM. time
3. Tender opening date and : 10-01-2005 at 3-30 PM. time

This amendment will be considered as a part & parcel of tender document. This notice will be supply free of cost to the tenderers.

Engr. Jnan Ranjan Sil, PHF
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Barisal

DFP-31258-27/12/04
G-1313

Indian troops kill Pakistani insurgents in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

Indian troops in insurgency-hit Kashmir have killed three Pakistani members of a hardline Islamic militant group fighting for the Himalayan region's secession from India, an army spokesman said Friday.

"The three were killed during a 20-hour long encounter with Indian army soldiers," said the spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel V.K. Batra.

The gunfight had started around midday Thursday in the village of Ribon, near Sopore town, 50 kilometers north of the summer capital Srinagar.

"All three slain militants were Pakistani nationals," the spokesman said, adding they were members of Lashkar-e-Taiba, which wants Kashmir to be joined with Pakistan.



Indian sand artist Sudarshan Patnaik completes a sculpture in memory of the victims of the tsunami disaster in Puri some 100 Kms south of the capital of the Indian state of Orissa, Bhubaneswar yesterday.

Australian mother's terrible choice

BBC NEWS ONLINE

Australian mother Jillian Searle faced an agonising decision as a wall of water approached her on the Thai resort island of Phuket on Sunday.

She had her two young children with her, but realised she would only survive if she let go of one of them.

"I knew that if I held on to both, we would all die," she told reporters. "I just thought I'd better let go of the one that's the eldest."

Fortunately all three survived, and are now back in their home city of Perth.

Moments before the tsunami hit, the Searle family had been enjoying breakfast near their hotel pool.

Mrs Searle's husband had just gone back into the hotel when water engulfed the area, and she found herself clinging onto her two sons, desperate to keep hold of them.

Still clutching her two-year-old son, Blake, she appealed to a woman nearby to grab hold of five-year-old Lachie - who cannot swim.

Although the other woman tried to hold on, she was forced to let go and he slipped into the water.

The boys' father, Brad, watched the scene helplessly from the balcony of their first-floor hotel room.

He found his wife and younger son soon after the water receded, and the family then went in search of Lachie.

"I was screaming, trying to find him, and we thought he was dead," Mrs Searle said.

Lachie was found two hours later, having been discovered by a security guard clinging to a door to keep his head above water.

"I just can't believe they are still here."

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ব্র্যাকের অভ্যন্তরীণ নিরীক্ষা বিভাগে নিরীক্ষা কর্মকর্তা পদে যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন মহিলা ও পুরুষ প্রার্থীদের নিকট থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে।

শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা বাণিজ্যে স্নাতকোত্তর ও কোন সি.এ ফর্ম থেকে আর্টিকেলশিপ সমাপ্তির সনদপ্রাপ্ত হতে হবে। কোন পরীক্ষায় তৃতীয় বিভাগে উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের দরখাস্ত করার প্রয়োজন নেই। বয়স সর্বোচ্চ ৩৩ বছর। বেতন সর্বমাকুল্যে ৮,৪৯০/- টাকা।

নির্বাচিত কর্মীদের কর্মস্থল ঢাকা। তবে নিরীক্ষা কাজের জন্য নিয়মিতভাবে প্রত্যন্ত অঞ্চলে যাওয়ার মানসিকতা থাকতে হবে।

চাকুরিতে যোগদানের পর হতে বীমা (ইস্যুরেন্স) সুবিধা পাওয়া যাবে। চাকুরিতে স্থায়ী হওয়ার পর আনুভৌতিক (গ্র্যাচুইটি) ও ভবিষ্যনিধির (প্রভিডেন্ট ফান্ড) সুবিধা আছে।

পূর্ণ জীবনব্যাপ্ত, স্নাতকোত্তর পাশ ও সি.এ কোর্স সমাপ্তির সার্টিফিকেটের ফটোকপি এবং দুই কপি সাম্প্রতিক তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজ ছবিসহ আগামী জানুয়ারী ২০, ২০০৫-এর মধ্যে ব্র্যাক-এইচআরডি, ব্র্যাক সেন্টার, ৭৫ মহাখালী, ঢাকা ১২১২ এই ঠিকানায় আবেদন করতে হবে। খামের উপর আবেদনকৃত পদের নাম উল্লেখ থাকতে হবে।

ব্র্যাক কর্মী নিয়োগে সম-সুযোগ ধরনে বিশ্বাসী

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We need enlightened human beings

We need enlightened human beings

গণকামিত সত্যিক দৃষ্টি

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... a combination that remains a fallacy to many