

Pakistan quake children start to sicken

AFP, Kan Bangla

Veiled mothers huddled with feverish babies in ruined Pakistani villages yesterday as sickness started to bite among earthquake survivors who spent a freezing night beneath open skies.

In crumbled settlements that no aid workers had reached more than a day after the powerful quake that killed at least 215 people, shivering residents begged for shelter, food, medicine—or just stay at all.

"We had so few blankets to cover ourselves during the night that we only had one between six children," farmer Shahnewaz Khan told an AFP reporter who reached the remote southwestern village of Kan Bangla.

"The cold was so severe that some of our children have fallen ill," he said, pointing to some wailing infants as their mothers tried to provide them with warmth and comfort.

Khan said some 20 people died when their mud-brick, straw-roofed homes collapsed in the 6.4-magnitude quake, but said they had not had any contact from Pakistani authorities or aid groups.

The village, which lies about 35 kilometres (25 miles) from the historic hill town of Ziarat, is one of a cluster in impoverished Baluchistan province that were worst affected by the quake.

Jaan Baba, an injured elderly man, showed makeshift tents that villagers had constructed with whatever they could scavenge from the shells of their houses. His own house was reduced to a pile of rubble.

"Some of the children do not even have sweaters or shoes and they are very gravely exposed to the weather," he told AFP.

People from the village of Gogi, about 60 kilometres (40 miles) from Ziarat, decided not to wait for help, instead travelling to Quetta to draw attention to their plight.

"The problem is that Gogi is situated some five kilometres off the road. A few volunteers came and left but delivered nothing," villager Mohammad Mateen told reporters.

As with the 2005 earthquake that killed 74,000 people in northern Pakistan, it was hardline Islamist groups, some with militant links, that were among the first on the scene.

One of them, Jamaat-ud-Dawa, has been listed by the US as a "terrorist organisation" because it is the political wing of the outlawed Kashmiri militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Its officials were handing out blankets, food, milk and biscuits in the area as early as Wednesday night.

"We do not believe in politics but to serve the people when they need it the most," Mohammad Qasim, a local Jamaat-ud-Dawa official told AFP.

"We will also send tents to the people soon."

The mayor of Ziarat district hit out



Homeless earthquake survivors sit in an open space on a hillside in Kawa, one of about eight sparsely populated villages surrounding the town of Ziarat yesterday in the area worst hit by a 6.4-magnitude earthquake the day before. As a weak sun rose over the rubble of their homes, shivering Pakistani earthquake survivors begged for shelter, food, medicine, or indeed any help at all.



The Asia Foundation Position Vacancy – Program Coordinator

The Asia Foundation's Bangladesh office seeks qualified applicants for the position of **Dhaka-based Program Coordinator** for a new initiative to enhance sub-national investment climate reforms in Bangladesh, which the Foundation is undertaking in cooperation with the International Finance Corporation's Bangladesh Investment Climate Fund. The successful applicant will be responsible for the development, implementation, monitoring, and documentation of program activities in select districts and for maintaining regular contact and coordination with a variety of local partners and stakeholders. Specific responsibilities will include program design and implementation, development and application of monitoring and evaluation tools, coordination of program activities in several district-level working areas, design and implementation of training workshops and seminars, facilitation of local-level policy dialogue between local enterprises and government officials, planning and implementation of domestic and regional exchange programs, and preparation of program reports and records. The successful applicant will be required to make frequent field trips to program sites in select districts.

Key Qualifications:

- At least ten years of progressively responsible work experience in the design and implementation of programs with a focus on economic growth, enterprise development, with a particular focus on governance dimensions, preferably with an international organization. District-level program experience is an asset.
- Master's degree in economics, business administration, finance, public policy, or other relevant discipline
- Fluency in written and spoken English and Bangla
- Proficiency in MS Word and Excel, email, and Internet applications
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Proven organizational and supervisory skills
- Ability to work both in a team environment and independently
- Meticulous attention to detail

The Asia Foundation is committed to a policy of providing equal opportunities in recruiting and selecting employees. The Foundation offers excellent salary and benefits commensurate with experience.

Applicants are requested to send their CV, together with a cover letter (not more than two pages) demonstrating their competencies for the position to:

Program Coordinator
The Asia Foundation
House 3/B, Road 50
Gulshan-2, Dhaka
Bangladesh

The closing date is Sunday, November 9, 2008. Applications that do not meet the minimum requirements will not be considered. No telephone enquiries please. Only short listed candidates will be contacted.



PHOTO: AFP
A police-man attends to a wounded man after powerful bomb exploded near the District Court in Guwahati, the capital city of India's northeastern Assam state yesterday. At least 61 people were killed and 100 injured in a series of blasts that ripped through the Assam state, police said.

US vows no let-up in anti-terror efforts Washington voices 'concern' about Pakistan

AP, AP, Washington

The United States said Wednesday it was ready to discuss Pakistan's "very serious problem" with extremism anytime authorities there wish to, but vowed no let-up in counter-terrorism efforts.

Declining to comment specifically on suspected US strikes along the border with Afghanistan, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said "We are committed to working with Pakistan to beat back what is a common enemy in the territories."

Pakistan's foreign ministry said earlier it had summoned the US ambassador to Islamabad, Anne Patterson, to register "a strong protest" over a number of missile attacks by US drones inside its territory.

"Our ambassador will certainly go in and see the Pakistanis anytime they want to see her about these issues," said Perino.

Pakistan's government summoned the US ambassador on Wednesday to urge an immediate halt to missile strikes on suspected militant hide-outs near the Afghan border.

But Perino spurned any suggestion that US strikes were fueling resentment against the United States and stoking extremism, denying "that we incited that, that it was our fault that terrorists attack."

Having called in US Ambassador Anne Patterson on Wednesday, "a strong protest was lodged on the continued missile attacks by US drones inside Pakistani territory," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

The attacks have led to the loss of "precious lives and property" and "undermine public support for the government's counterterrorism policies," the statement said.

US President George W. Bush believes that "Pakistan has a very serious problem" with extremism and that authorities there "recognise how serious that problem is," said the spokeswoman.

"We remain very concerned but we remain willing to work with them," she said, underlining that Pakistan had "very serious issues when it comes to their economy as well."

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Divisive forces are out to break India Says Manmohan

PTI, Nanded, Maharashtra

In the backdrop of violence against north Indians in Maharashtra, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today warned that "divisive forces" were out to break the country and halt its progress.

Addressing a function here as part of Guru-ta-Gaddi tercentenary celebrations of Sikhs here, he said the unity and integrity of the country needed to be protected in the wake of these attempts.

"There are divisive powers who want to break this country and halt its progress... There were forces who want people to fight with each other," Singh said.

"We have to protect the unity and integrity of the nation," the Prime Minister said.

Though he did not refer to any particular incident, the comment assumes significance as it comes in the backdrop of attacks against north Indians in Maharashtra, which has triggered angry reactions.

Singh underlined that there was a need to think about how to move the nation ahead.

"Come let's move ahead together shoulder-to-shoulder," he said.

Highlighting the role played by Sikhs in nation building, the Prime Minister appealed to the Khalsa Panth to do its best for the development of the country.

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