

Did you know?

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UN seeks \$562m quake aid for Haiti

Considers redeploying 5,000 peacekeepers

AFP, Port-au-Prince

Haitians cowered in fear yesterday as armed looters scavenged through their ruined capital filled with the stench of rotting corpses after the earthquake said by the UN to be the worst disaster it had ever faced.

As US troops tried to unblock an aid logjam and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton headed to the disaster zone, the Haiti government admitted it was no longer able to function properly.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon was set to visit devastated Haiti today as the world body on Friday appealed for 562 million dollars from donors to assist victims of the earthquake.

And while international rescuers continued to work around the clock in tropical temperatures, their efforts were hampered by a lack of fuel and transport as the sense of despair set in among exhausted survivors.

"The streets smell of death," said Talulum Saint Fils, who sold her jewellery to pay for one-way bus tickets for her family out of Port-au-Prince.

"There is no assistance of any kind, and our children simply cannot live like animals."

The Haitian capital -- insecure at the best of times -- is now devoid of a functioning police force, bringing fears of a dystopian war of all against all in the wake of Tuesday's huge 7.0-magnitude earthquake.

"Men suddenly appeared with machetes to steal money," said Evelyn Buino, a young beautician, after a long night in a neighbourhood not far from the ruined city centre. "This is just the beginning."

Thousands of criminals were on the loose, having escaped from the city's collapsed jail, and there were widespread reports of robberies.

In the bustling Marche en Fer, or Iron Market, one of the poorest neighbourhoods, teenage looters scuttled over the concrete debris and ignored piles of dead bodies on the street in their desperate bid to dig out supplies.

"People are hungry, thirsty. They are left on their own," said Leon Meleste, an Adventist sporting a white "New York" baseball cap.

"It is increasingly dangerous. The police doesn't exist, people are doing what they want."

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Foreign Minister Dipu Moni speaks at a roundtable on Bangladesh-India summit organised by The Daily Star at its office in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Proshika staff stage sit-in

3 staff beaten up as standoff continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of Proshika employees staged a sit-in in front of their head office for the fifth consecutive day yesterday and also held a protest march against police barring them from entering the building in the city's Mirpur.

Proshika authorities wrote a letter to Dhaka Metropolitan Police DC (Mirpur zone) Lutfur Kabir on January 13 and the following day served a legal notice asking for the office key to be handed over to them within 24 hours.

Police did not respond till yesterday.

Meanwhile, men hired by the organisation's ousted chairman Qazi Faruque Ahmed launched physical assaults on employees and injured Azad, Shahin Rahman and Anwar around noon.

"We are being denied justice," said Shahin Rahman, a Proshika manager from Manikganj.

The government high-ups have reportedly been silent ever since around 20 to 25 hired goons of Qazi Faruque broke in Proshika head office Monday midnight and took control.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Jyoti Basu still critical

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The condition of ailing CPM patriarch Jyoti Basu turned extremely critical yesterday with all his vital organs affected and an attending doctor said, "There is little hope of good result."

"All five vital organs -- heart, lungs, kidney, brain and liver are not functioning properly," Dr Ajit Kumar Maity, Basu's personal physician and a member of the medical board at AMRI hospital, said in Kolkata.

Asked about chances of recovery of the 95-year-old former West Bengal chief minister Maity said, "given the complications he is suffering from, there is little hope of any good result. The doctors are doing their best."

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Prayer Timing		
January 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-36	5-40
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

NGO boss fills top 11 posts with close relatives

ALPHA ARZU

The top 11 posts of HEED Bangladesh, a non-government organisation (NGO), are occupied by relatives of its executive director.

Executive Director of the NGO, Elgin Saha, appointed his wife Tereja Saha as the vice-principal of HEED International School, his son Timon Toran Saha as assistant director of HEED Handicraft, his sisters Supti Saha and Urmi Saha as principal of HEED Language Centre and human resource officer of HEED respectively and maternal cousin Elis Arun Majumder as manager of disaster management department.

Elgin's nephews Bappi Pande and Noel Pande were employed as auditor and manager of nutrition programme of the NGO respectively. His brother-in-law Samuel Gain was given the post of liaison officer. His son's father-in-law Dilip Sarker is working as principal of HEED Music School while his two brothers Nikhil Krishna Saha and Nikhil Chandra Saha were made directors of micro-credit department.

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QUAKE-HIT HAITI Bangladesh to send medical team tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh will send a 30-member medical team, comprising 20 doctors and 10 health technicians, to earthquake-hit Haiti by tomorrow.

The decision came from a meeting of the health and family planning ministry held yesterday with its Minister AFM Ruhul Haque in the chair. The minister directed the authorities concerned to take all necessary steps to send the team by Monday along with necessary medicines.

A devastating earthquake hit Haitian capital on Tuesday killing thousands of people and affecting more than 3 million.

HIMALAYAN GLACIERS, TRANS-BOUNDARY RIVERS Experts for regional monitoring system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Regional experts in the water sector yesterday recommended a joint regional monitoring system on the Himalayas glaciers and coordinated management of trans-boundary rivers.

During the Himalayan Sub-regional Cooperation for Water Security workshop, experts from Bangladesh, India, China and Nepal agreed that trust and cooperation is vital to combat the impacts of climate change.

The workshop was organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS).

The experts said that if temperatures increase by two degrees by 2050 as a result of climate change, 35 per cent of glaciers will disappear and water supplies will be dramatically reduced.

The Himalayan glaciers are the source of fresh water for billions of people in the region.

Water from the glaciers feeds into the Indus River in Pakistan, the Brahmaputra River in India and Bangladesh, the Mekong River in Southeast Asia, the Irrawaddy in Myanmar, the Yellow and Yangtze rivers of China as well as a multitude of smaller rivers that flow through the Indo-Gangetic Plains.

Termining water as the most crucial issue outside security, the experts agreed to share knowledge about glaciers and trans-boundary rivers and to place an emphasis on trust and cooperation when maintaining the sources of fresh water.

They agreed that if the source of fresh water is not maintained on a cooperative basis, a lack of water could lead to serious political conflict.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Govt to ensure int'l standard war crime trial

Says state minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Quamrul Islam yesterday urged people not to go for wholesale filing of cases across the country against war criminals as that may hamper the trial of the criminals.

"Have confidence in the government. It will make sure that the trial is held as per international standards," he told a seminar at Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban of Dhaka University organised by Bangladesh Awami Ain Chhatra Parishad.

The minister also assured the people of a fair trial of the individuals who were involved

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Nabo Mian from Kamrangirchar in the city bought this pile of soil removed from the Buriganga riverbed in the ongoing clean-up drive only to use it for filling up a spot in the same river half a km away.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Ashuganj rental power plant now ready to operate

National grid gets 55MW by this month

SHEIKH MD SHAHIDUL ISLAM, B'baria

The national grid will get 55 megawatt (MW) of electricity by the end of this month as a gas-fired rental power plant set up by a local company is likely to go into production in Ashuganj by the time.

The company, Precision Energy Limited (Pel), started its pre-commissioning yesterday after 15 months of delay. Now the plant is about to get ready for power generation and it can supply power to the national grid by January 31, official sources said.

The plant built by Pel that had no prior experience of constructing or operating a rental power plant was supposed to launch its commercial operation from October 27, 2008 on a three-year rental contract with the Power Development Board (PDB).

But as the Pel was failing to make any progress in late 2008, as it could not arrange loans for the project, the PDB recommended cancelling this deal. Later, upon pressure and plea from Pel, the PDB gave it a fresh deadline till March 31, 2009. But as the company failed again, the PDB gave December 31, 2009 as the

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Poor litigants to get govt support

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken an initiative to provide financial assistance to poor litigants so that they can get justice.

The government will help the poor litigants through its legal aid committee to move cases filed by insolvent people.

A significant number of people cannot move cases due to financial problem, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said yesterday while inaugurating the 94th judicial administration training course for 18 judges of the women and children repression prevention tribunals at the Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) in Dhaka.

JATI Director General Justice Hamidul Huq presided over the inaugural function.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Afghan MPs reject most cabinet picks

AP, AFP, Kabul

The Afghan parliament has rejected the majority of President Hamid Karzai's second slate of cabinet choices in a new setback to the US-backed leader.

Lawmakers rejected 10 nominees for Cabinet posts and approved only seven in Saturday's vote.

In a vote aired live on state television, 223 parliamentarians voted in a secret ballot to reject 10 of the 17 picks and approved only seven for the second-ever elected government of Afghanistan, Mohammad Yunus Qanooni said.

The ministers who were confirmed included Karzai's former national security adviser Zalmi Rasoul, who will be foreign minister, and Amina Afzali as minister of women's affairs.

On January 2 lawmakers voted against 17 of Karzai's 24 original choices, delivering a blow to his authority, already undermined after he was declared winner of an August election marred by massive fraud, mostly in his favour.

Karzai presented 17 other new appointees -- 14 men and three women -- as his second choice and is yet to put forward a name for the ministry of water and power.

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BSF kills 1

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Indian Border Security Forces shot dead a citizen of Bangladesh at Kazipur border under Gangni upazila of Meherpur yesterday. Identified as Sahidul Islam, 36, was working at a field near the border point around 10:30am when BSF opened fire on him, according to Bangladesh Rifles.

Sahidul, a son of Sher Ali of Kazipur village, died on the spot.

BSF took away the body. Later, BDR personnel from 32 Rifles Battalion sent a letter to BSF protesting the killing and asked the latter to sit in a flagmeeting.

Pakistani nukes in safe custody says Gilani

ANI, Islamabad

Pakistan Prime Minister has stressed that the country's nuclear assets are in safe custody.

Speaking during a meeting of the Strategic Planning Division's (SPD) here, Gilani said Pakistan is a responsible state and that it believed in the policy of minimum deterrence.

Sources privy to the meeting, which was attended by Interior Minister Rehman Malik, Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Babar Awan, DG ISI General Shuja Pasha besides other top officials, said that Islamabad has drafted a legislation to transfer the nuclear assets and their regularisation in accordance with international laws.

Earlier, addressing the National Assembly (NA) Gilani, while

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OnlinePoll

Do you think formulation of code of conduct is necessary for the House members to ensure high moral standard?

Yes (93.7%)
No (4.7%)
No Comments (1.6%)

Total votes: 780

TODAY'S POLL

Do you support BNP's decision to forge an antigovernment movement for the treaties with India?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net