

NEWS IN brief

Natural disasters killed over 22,000 in 2013

AFP, Geneva
Natural disasters claimed over 22,000 lives last year, with Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines the deadliest of all, the Red Cross said yesterday. In its annual report on disasters, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) put last year's overall natural disaster death toll at 22,452. That was well under the 2004-2013 average of 97,954 per year. The number of people affected by disasters in 2013 -- almost 100 million, overwhelmingly in Asia -- was also the lowest in a decade.

India to pay Iran \$400m in past oil dues

PTI, New Delhi
After clearing \$1.65 billion in past oil dues, India will in next few days pay another \$400 million to Iran. Since February 2013, when the US blocked payment channels to Iran for its nuclear programme, India has been paying 45 per cent of its Iran oil bill in rupees through a UCO Bank branch in Kolkata. For the remainder, it had been waiting for a way to make the payment.

Bermuda braces for Hurricane Gonzalo

AFP, Washington
Hurricane Gonzalo yesterday gained strength overnight into as it barreled in the Atlantic toward Bermuda, which was bracing for a hit from the powerful Category Four storm. Gonzalo's winds were whirling at 140 miles per hour, The US National Hurricane Center said. It was expected to pass today near Bermuda, which could see flooding along the coast.

Afghans capture two Haqqani commanders

AFP, Kabul
Afghan security forces yesterday said they have captured two senior leaders of the feared Haqqani network. Anas Haqqani, the son of the network's founder Jalaluddin Haqqani, was arrested late Tuesday along with another commander, officials said. Anas played an important role in the network's "strategic decision-making", Sediqi said.

TRAGEDY ON HIMALAYAS Rescuers airlift 154 to safety; death toll crosses 30

AFP, Kathmandu
Workers using helicopters and battling waist-deep snow rescued over 150 people including foreign trekkers left stranded in Nepal's Himalayas yesterday, two days after a major snowstorm that triggered avalanches and killed more than 30 people.

Local officials said 23 bodies have been found on the popular Annapurna circuit trekking route, while five climbers who were staying at a mountain base camp when it was hit by an avalanche could not be found and were presumed dead. Three Nepalese yak herders were also killed when severe weather triggered by the tail end of Cyclone Hudhud hit the picturesque Annapurna region in central Nepal.

But the majority of victims were tourists -- among them Canadians, Israelis and Indians -- and their guides and porters. "We have made a lot of progress today; we have airlifted 154 people to safety, including 76 foreigners," said Ganesh Rai, the police official in charge of the rescue effort.

As dusk fell, strong winds picked up in the affected districts of Manang and Mustang, making it too risky for pilots to continue scanning the snow-blanketed slopes for signs of victims, officials said. Thousands of people head to the Annapurna region every October, when weather conditions are usually clear and cool, and 168 foreign tourists were registered to hike in the affected districts this week.

Keshav Pandey, vice president of the Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN), an industry body, said the Himalayan nation has no warning systems in place to inform trekkers of severe weather conditions.

Nepal trekking tragedy

Hikers killed in snowstorm on popular Annapurna circuit



AFP

Rescuers have retrieved the bodies of three Israelis, three Poles, one Vietnamese, one Slovak and seven Nepalese, while the bodies of four Canadians and three Indians remain buried in snow, Rai said, correcting an earlier statement that misidentified one of the victims as a German. The nationality of three others found was unknown, he said.

At least seven of the hikers lost their lives in an avalanche in Manang and 16 others were buried by the snowstorm in neighbouring Mustang, according to a local official.

The region has seen unusually heavy snowfall this week sparked by Cyclone Hudhud, which slammed into India's east coast over the weekend.

Modi pledges support to Afghan leader

TNN, New Delhi

India will stand with Afghanistan "at every step" as a friend and partner, Indian PM Narendra Modi told new Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday. Modi called Ghani to congratulate him on his election as president.

"Prime Minister Modi conveyed that India will stand with him, as a friend and a partner, at every step on the way, as his government moves forward in its efforts to build a strong, stable, peaceful, democratic, inclusive and prosperous nation," said the government in a release.

In his response, Ghani described India as the foundation of Afghanistan's diplomacy and economic strategy as he complimented Modi on his electoral success and his development vision, which, he said, would be beneficial for Afghanistan and the entire region.



Dream come true Boy, 10, becomes Hyderabad's police commissioner for a day

THE HINDU ONLINE

Ten-year-old Sadiq always wanted to catch thieves and uphold the rule of law. He dreamt of sitting on the Police Commissioner's chair at his desk, sign important files, and give instructions to the orderlies. On Wednesday, all his dreams came true.

Clad in a well-ironed police uniform, replete with medals, honorary badges, shiny shoes, and belt embossed with the insignia of Telangana police, Sadiq assumed Hyderabad Commissioner's office.

Files were brought and kept on his desk for signatures. It was a day to remember for Sadiq who hails from Peddapalli, Karimnagar, and is terminally ill.

Sadiq's family came to know about the ailment five months back and since then he is undergoing treatment at state-run MNJ Institute of Oncology. Later, the family came in contact with 'Make a Wish Foundation', who decided to fulfil the child's dream.

INDIAN ASSEMBLY ELECTION Exit poll: Modi to snatch key states from Congress

TNN, New Delhi

The BJP will form the next government in both Maharashtra and Haryana, exit polls predicted on Wednesday. The only thing they did not agree on was whether the party would win a clear majority on its own.

If the polls are proved right, it would validate the BJP's bold gamble in going it alone in both states, as well as its focus on a Narendra Modi-centred campaign that dwelt more on governance issues than on the communal rhetoric often associated with the saffron party.

Of the four exit polls that made projections for Maharashtra, one -- done by Today's Chanakya -- gave the BJP 151 seats or a clear majority in the 288-member assembly. Another, done by AC Nielsen for ABP News, predicted the party would just hit the half-way mark of 144.

The CVoter poll conducted for Times Now gave the BJP 138 seats



and the Cicero poll for the India Today group gave it 124. In the latter two, while the BJP would need some support from others it should hardly find that a problem. Interestingly, the Sena too is not seen as a major loser, at least in terms of seats, from the break-up of the 25-year old alliance with the BJP. All the polls agreed that it would finish second and that it would improve significantly upon its 2009 tally of 44 seats, though the numbers varied from 59 to 77. Three of the four polls put the Congress in third spot, just a little ahead of the NCP while one had it the other way round. In Haryana, only three polls made predictions and two of them gave the BJP a clear majority, while the third had it hitting the half-way mark of the 90-member house. The polls were also unanimous that Om Prakash Chautala's INLD would finish second with about 22-23 seats, the Congress a distant third and Kuldeep Bishnoi's HJCBL an also ran.

Family farms key in eradicating hunger: UN

AFP, Rome

Nine out of ten of the world's 570 million farms are managed by families and it is they who hold the key to eradicating global hunger, the United Nations said in a report yesterday.

"Family farms produce about 80 percent of the world's food and... are the custodians of about 75 percent of all agricultural resources in the world," according to the report by the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

That makes them a "crucial agent of change in achieving sustainable food security and in eradicating hunger in the future," it said.

Their prevalence and output mean they "are vital to the solution of the hunger problem" afflicting more than 800 million people, FAO head Jose Graziano da Silva said in the State of Food and Agriculture 2014 report.

Although the UN announced in September that the number of hungry people in the world has dropped by 100 million over the last 10 years, one in nine are still undernourished and about 842 million people remain chronically hungry because

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On behalf of the Trustee
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Prof Hematram Yadav
Professor
MBBS (Kerala), MPH (UM), MBA (BU), MRSH (UK), FAMM

Prof Hematram Yadav was the former Director at the Ministry of Health, Malaysia in the Family Health Development Division. Subsequently, he worked as Head of Family Health Division in the Department of Social & Preventive Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya and as consultant in World Health Organisation (WHO). Prof Yadav is currently a Professor in the Community Medicine Division at IMU.

Dr Nagashekhara Molugulu
Lecturer, Coordinator (Master of Formulation Science)
BPharm (KU), MPharm (RGUHS), PhD (Unirazak)

Dr Nagashekhara Molugulu has worked in top 10 pharmaceutical industries in India. Besides that, he has held the position of Chief Hospital Pharmacist for PES medical and research hospital in India. He has published and presented over 35 scientific papers in reputed journals and in National and International conferences. Currently, Dr Nagashekhara is a lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine and Health, IMU.

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Pak air strikes kill 21 militants

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's military yesterday said it had killed 21 militants in air strikes in a remote tribal district near the Afghan border, a region where it has been battling Islamist groups for more than a decade.

The attacks took place early morning in the Tirah valley of Khyber district, where the Taliban and another banned militant group, Lashkar-e-Islam, have taken refuge, the military said in a statement.

Pakistan has been battling Islamist groups in its semi-autonomous tribal belt since 2004 after its army entered the region to search for Al-Qaeda fighters that had fled across the border following the US-led invasion of Afghanistan.

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(2nd Re-advertisement) REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS (CHT)

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility (CHTDF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh, seeks proposals from interested and well qualified organizations in response to the following RFP in the CHT.

Conducting Baseline survey for the Agriculture and Food Security Project (AFSP) Phase II in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of CHTDF, UNDP

All interested organizations are requested to attend a **pre-bid meeting** to be held on **Wednesday, 22 October 2014 at 10:30 am** at CHTDF, UNDP Dhaka Office (IDB Bhaban, 7th Floor, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka). Maximum two (2) participants from each organization are allowed.

The RFP along with the instructions for submission can be downloaded from UNDP website: http://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_notice.cfm?notice_id=18768. The deadline for proposal submission is **Sunday, 02 November 2014 04:30 pm** (Local Time)



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