

DEADLIEST EARTHQUAKES IN LAST 30 YRS

March 11, 2011
Nearly 18,900 are killed when a tsunami triggered by a massive magnitude 9.0 undersea quake slams into the northeast coast of Japan, triggering a nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi atomic plant.

October 23, 2011
An earthquake of 7.2 magnitude rocks eastern Turkey, leaving more than 600 dead and at least 4,150 injured.

January 12, 2010
Magnitude 7.0 quake hits Haiti, leaving between 250,000 and 300,000 dead.

April 14, 2010
A 6.9-magnitude quake hits Yushu county in northwest China's Qinghai province leaving 3,000 people dead and missing.

May 12, 2008
A quake measuring 8.0 hits China's southwest province of Sichuan, leaving more than 87,000 people dead or missing.

May 27, 2006
A powerful quake in Indonesia's Yogyakarta region kills 6,000 and leaves 1.5 million homeless.

October 8, 2005
An earthquake of 7.6 kills more than 75,000 people, the vast majority of them in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province and the Pakistani-administered zone of Kashmir state. Some 3.5 million are displaced.

December 26, 2004
A massive undersea earthquake off the coast of Sumatra island triggers a tsunami which kills 220,000 in countries around the Indian Ocean, including 168,000 in Indonesia.

December 26, 2003
A quake measuring 6.7 hits the Iranian city of Bam, killing at least 31,884 people and injuring 18,000.

January 26, 2001
A massive 7.7 earthquake hits the western Indian state of Gujarat, killing 25,000 people and injuring 166,000.

September 30, 1993
A 6.3-magnitude quake hits the western Indian state of Maharashtra, killing 7,601.

August 20, 1988
A magnitude 6.8 quake hits eastern Nepal, killing 721 people in Nepal and at least 277 in the neighbouring Indian state of Bihar.

DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE IN NEPAL



Pictures show the devastation caused by the massive earthquake that hit Nepal yesterday. The 7.8 magnitude quake killed more than 1,400 people yesterday as it tore through large parts of Nepal, toppling office blocks and towers in Kathmandu and triggering a deadly avalanche at Everest base camp. But the final toll from the quake could be much higher, and dozens more people were reported killed in neighbouring India and China.

NEPAL QUAKE

180 bodies retrieved from historic tower
PTI, Kathmandu

Nepal's 19th-century nine-storey Dharahara tower in the heart of the capital on Saturday became a burial ground for hundreds of visitors who had come to see the panoramic views of the Kathmandu valley from the top of the minaret. The 50.5-metre-high historic tower was reduced to just its base after the powerful earthquake struck Nepal on flattening the minaret and trapping hundreds of visitors.

13 killed in Tibet
PTI, Beijing

At least 13 people, including an 83-year-old woman, were killed in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region yesterday after a powerful earthquake of 7.9 magnitude jolted neighbouring Nepal. The earthquake seriously injured many others in Tibet, state-run Xinhua news agency cited local authorities as saying.

18 aftershocks
TNN, New Delhi

The intensity of tremors that have hit Nepal can be gauged by the fact that after the massive 7.8/9 magnitude first one, it has had 18 more tremors since then, all of them with the magnitude of over 4 on the Richter scale. Seven of them were above 5 and one at a big 6.6.

PHOTOS: REUTERS, AFP

Death, panic on Everest once more

AFP, Mount Everest

Climbers on the world's highest mountain pleaded for help yesterday after a massive earthquake triggered an avalanche at Everest base camp, killing at least 10 people and sparking panic. Base camp was crowded with foreign mountaineers and their sherpa teams at the start of the climbing season when the avalanche hit, destroying camps and sending slabs of ice crashing in what was described as a "huge disaster".

"Running for life from my tent. Unhurt. Many more people up the mountain," tweeted Romanian climber Alex Gavan who had been preparing to ascend nearby Lhotse, the world's fourth highest peak.

"Huge disaster. Helped searched and rescued victims through huge debris area. Many dead. Much more badly injured. More to die if not heli asap," he later tweeted.

Ten people were confirmed dead on the mountain and rescue efforts were underway but heavy snow was preventing helicopters from reaching climbers, an official said.

"There might be over 1,000 people there right now, including foreign climbers and Nepalese supporting staffs. Rescue helicopters have not been able to fly because of the weather," Gyanendra Kumar Shrestha, an official in Nepal's tourism department, told AFP.

The avalanche and earthquake come just one year after a disaster on Everest killed 16 guides and triggered an unprecedented shut-down of the 8,848 metre (29,029 feet) peak.

Was this the big earthquake predicted in the Himalayas?

THE HINDU ONLINE

The main fault in Nepal marks where the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates crash into each other -- also known as the Main Frontal Thrust (MFT) fault. Recent studies have shown that this fault has a rich history of evident and not-so-evident quakes, and was ripe for another major one.

In an interview to The Hindu in May 2013, Vinod Kumar Gaur, seismologist with the Centre for Mathematical Modelling and Computer Simulation, had said: "Calculations show that there is sufficient accumulated energy [in the MFT], now to produce an 8 magnitude earthquake. I cannot say when. It may not happen tomorrow, but it could possibly happen sometime this century, or wait longer to produce a much larger one."

In a study published in the journal Nature Geoscience in December 2012, a research team led by Nanyang Technological University (NTU) discovered that massive earthquakes in the range of 8 to 8.5 magnitudes on the Richter scale had left clear ground scars in the central Himalayas. High resolution imagery and dating techniques showed that in 1255 and 1934, two great earthquakes ruptured the surface of the Earth in the Himalayas. The 1934 earthquake broke the surface over a length of more than 150 km.

Other than these "surface rupture" quakes, scientists have also found evidence of multiple "blind thrust" quakes that did not break the surface.

The leading scientist of the NTU study had then said that the existence of such devastating quakes in the past meant that quakes of the same magnitude could happen again in the region in future, especially in areas which have yet to have their surface broken by a temblor.

A series of studies earlier predicted that a massive earthquake in the South Asia is overdue. Researchers recently said tremendous underground stress built up in the 1,250-mile Himalayan fault could force a rupture soon -- in geological terms -- and produce a great quake of 8.1 to 8.3 magnitude.

Such a quake could affect some 50 million people in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan, they said, and kill

Google launches Person Finder for Nepal victims

TNN, New Delhi

The world's top search engine Google has launched a Person Finder tool to help the victims of earthquake in Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal. The web application is aimed to help people gather and relay information about those affected by the devastation.

The web application is aimed at helping individuals to post details of and search for the status of family members or friends affected by the earthquake.

The application has two boxes: one, 'I'm looking for someone'; and two, 'I have information about someone'.

For those who are looking for someone trapped or lost in the disaster, they can click on 'I'm looking for someone' and type in his/her name.

Similarly, if an individual wants his relatives or friends to know that he is safe, or if he has heard from someone or about someone stuck in the disaster affected area, then he can share the information through 'I have information about someone'. Google is offering People finder support in both English and Nepali.

The internet giant has used this application previously too during natural calamities in Jammu & Kashmir last year and in Uttarakhand in June 2013.

NEWS IN brief

Man held over Japan drone protest
REUTERS, Tokyo

A Japanese man has been arrested for landing a drone on the prime minister's office with a minuscule amount of radiation in an apparent protest against the use of nuclear power, four years after the Fukushima disaster. Media reported that Yasuo Yamamoto, 40, turned himself in at a police station in Fukui and said he landed

Nick Clegg rules out deal with SNP
AFP, London

Nick Clegg, leader of Britain's Liberal Democrats and potential kingmaker in next month's general election, yesterday ruled out a coalition with Labour if it required support from Scottish nationalists. The comments will boost Prime Minister David Cameron, who is likely to need Lib Dem's backing if he is to

Statue of Liberty 'safe' after threat
AFP, New York

The Statue of Liberty and its surrounding island, one of the most visited monuments in the United States, was given the all-clear Friday after being evacuated because of a bomb threat, police said. The threat was phoned into emergency services shortly after 11:00am (1500 GMT), sparking the immediate evacuation of all personnel and visitors, the national park service said.

Migrants rescued off Libyan coast
AL JAZEERA ONLINE

The Italian coastguard has rescued 228 migrants off the Libyan coast in the Mediterranean Sea. The latest rescue efforts come after a tragic accident off the Catania coast in Italy just days ago, in which more



A man pays his respect to Australian soldiers died in war during a dawn ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of ANZAC Day at the Australian National Memorial in Villers-Bretonneux, northern France, yesterday. The April 25, 1915 landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) at Gallipoli in modern-day Turkey has become a defining symbol of courage and comradeship for both nations.

PHOTO: AFP

Clashes rage as peace call grows in Yemen

AFP, Tuez

Fierce fighting raged yesterday in south Yemen between Iran-backed rebels and loyalists of exiled President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, as pressure mounted for the warring factions to hold political talks.

The Huthi rebels, who have overrun large parts of the country and forced Hadi to flee overseas, have demanded a complete end to a month of Saudi-led air strikes against them as a condition for UN-sponsored talks.

Clashes left at least 90 people dead yesterday in towns in the south of the impoverished country, strategically located next to oil-rich Saudi Arabia and key shipping routes.

Former strongman Ali Abdullah Saleh, who still holds sway over army units allied with the Shia rebels, late on Friday urged the Huthis to heed UN demands to withdraw from territory they have seized.

US Secretary of State John Kerry also called on the anti-government forces to enter into political dialogue to end a conflict.

Meanwhile, a flotilla of nine Iranian naval and cargo ships that US officials feared was carrying arms to strife-torn Yemen sailed northeast in the direction of Iran on Friday, and this should ease US concerns, a Pentagon spokesman said.

Leading Pak rights activist shot dead in Karachi

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A prominent Pakistani women's rights campaigner has been shot dead in a drive-by shooting in Karachi.

Sabeem Mehmud was travelling home with her mother from a discussion on torture allegations on Friday evening, when she was shot by the unidentified gunmen.

Mehmud died on her way to hospital, where doctors reportedly retrieved five bullets from her body. Her mother was also shot and remains in a critical condition.



Sabeem Mehmud

commonly known as T2F. Investigators would not be drawn on motives for the killing, but friends and colleagues described the death as an assassination.

Qadeer Baluch, an activist in the Baluchistan region, hinted government involvement in the killing.

"Everyone knows who killed her and why," he told the Nation newspaper, without elaborating.

As news of the murder spread many left messages of condolence on social media websites, with many calling the incident a "tragedy".

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif condemned the killing and ordered an investigation into the assassination.

Qaeda, ISIS gain in Syria, Iraq

AGENCIES

Al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate and its allies seized the last major government-held city in Idlib province yesterday, in a blow that could expose the regime's coastal heartland to rebel attack.

The city's fall opens up a strategic assault route for the rebels to neighbouring Latakia province on the Mediterranean coast, a bastion of President Bashar al-Assad's regime, analysts said. Sources said the bodies of at least 60 regime loyalists had been seen on the streets of the city, which was overrun by thousands of rebels.

In Iraq, Islamic State militants took partial control of a water dam and military barracks guarding it in the western Anbar province after fierce fighting through the night that continued yesterday, security sources and witnesses said.

Dozens of Iraqi troops were killed in the fighting, but poor communications in the area made it difficult to confirm a precise figure, said Athal al-Fahdawi, an Anbar provincial council member. Army sources said two senior officers were among the dead.



Woman hurls mango at president, gets flat as reward
BBC ONLINE

A Venezuelan woman has had her wish for a flat granted by President Nicolas Maduro after she made her point by hitting him on the head with a mango.

Marleny Olivo threw the fruit at the president while he was driving a bus through the central state of Aragua.

It had a message on it, in which she pleaded for his help. Maduro displayed the mango with her telephone number on it during a live television show afterwards. He said he had agreed to her request for a flat.

In a video that has gone viral in Venezuela, the president can be seen lowering his head when he is hit just above the left ear. He then calmly picks up the mango and displays it to the crowd.

The president - who is a former bus driver and likes to connect with ordinary Venezuelans by touring local communities at the wheel of a coach - added that the fruit was ripe and that he would eat it later.