

**NEPAL
QUAKE**

Everest climbing to resume next week
AFP, Kathmandu

Climbing will resume on Mount Everest by next week after an earthquake-triggered avalanche that left 18 people dead on the world's highest peak, a Nepalese government official said yesterday. Saturday's avalanche that ripped through base camp also destroyed ladders through the treacherous Khumbu icefall higher up the mountain, raising doubts about the future of this

Modi informed Nepal PM of quake!
TNN, New Delhi

Narendra Modi told reporters on Wednesday that Nepal's Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, who was away on an official visit to Thailand, learnt about the earthquake from his tweet. He said Koirala called to say that his tweet was his first source of information on the earthquake. "I get information because I remain connected," Modi said at a training programme for journalists in parliamentary processes.

Pak PM hails India's rescue efforts
TNN, New Delhi

Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif yesterday called up PM Narendra Modi and expressed his condolences on loss of lives in India due to earthquake. Modi said that he suggested to Sharif that "SAARC nations should conduct regular joint exercises on disaster



PHOTO: AFP



A Nepalese girl holds pillows under her arms (left) after spending the night under the awning of a heritage building in Bhaktapur on the outskirts of the Nepalese capital Kathmandu yesterday, and a handout picture (right) taken on Wednesday shows a Nepalese woman and child on rubble in the village of Sathighar, north of Katmandu, following the 7.8 magnitude earthquake which struck the Himalayan nation on April 25. The UN launched an appeal for Nepalese quake survivors in dire need of shelter, food and medical care yesterday as anger boiled at the government's inability to cope with a disaster that has killed more than 5,000 people.

A rare moment of joy in Nepal
'Miracle' as 15-year-old boy pulled from rubble alive after five days

AFP, Kathmandu

Rescuers pulled a 15-year-old boy alive from the rubble of Nepal's earthquake yesterday, bringing a rare moment of joy to the ruined capital Kathmandu, five days after a disaster which killed nearly 6,000 people.

The rescue of Pemba Tamang, who told AFP that he stayed alive by eating ghee, was hailed as a miracle and greeted with cheers from crowds of bystanders who massed to watch the drama unfold at a ruined guesthouse.

But the recovery of another teenager's body from the same ruins only minutes later underlined how the prospects of finding further survivors of Saturday's 7.8-magnitude quake were becoming more remote.

Caked in dust, Pemba was fitted with a neck brace and hooked up to an intravenous drip before being lifted onto a stretcher and then raced to a field hospital where he was found to have only minor cuts and bruises.

"I never thought I would make it out

alive," the teenager told AFP at the Israeli military-run facility where he was being kept for observation.

Pemba, who worked at the guesthouse as a bellboy, said he had been eating lunch next to reception when the ground started shaking.

"I tried to run but... something fell on my head and I lost consciousness -- I've no idea for how long," he said.

"When I came round, I was trapped under the debris and there was total darkness," he added.

"I heard other people's voices screaming out for help around me ... but I felt helpless."

Asked if he had had anything to eat while he was trapped, Pemba said he had come across a jar of ghee (clarified butter) in the dark.

Libby Weiss, a spokeswoman at the Israeli field hospital, said Pemba was doing "remarkably well", confirming he did not have any major injuries.

"He was under the rubble for 120 hours and it is certainly the longest we have heard anybody of being under the

rubble and surviving," she told AFP.

"I don't have any logical explanation. It is miraculous. It is a wonderful thing to see in all this destruction."

Launching an appeal for \$415 million in aid, the UN said it would take a marathon effort to help the people of one of Asia's poorest countries.

The UN's World Health Organization said it had received reports that around 1,400 had been killed in the Sindhupalchowk region, a mountainous region northeast of Kathmandu which was becoming a major focus of international relief efforts.

Nepalese and Indian military helicopters have also been flying in aid to remote areas of Gorkha district, another badly-hit region, which otherwise takes up to 12 days to reach by foot, the WHO said.

The latest official toll put the number of dead at 5,844 and more than 10,000 are known to have been injured. More than 100 people were also killed in neighbouring countries such as India and China.

Epidemic fear grows among homeless

AFP, Kathmandu

With its sewage system badly damaged, carcasses rotting in the rubble and thousands of people sleeping rough, experts say Nepal faces a race against time to ensure a devastating earthquake does not trigger a public health disaster.

"When you've got an environment where hygiene is poor and people are drinking water from dubious sources there's always going to be a risk of water-borne diseases, diarrhoea and respiratory diseases," Patrick Fuller, Asia-Pacific spokesman for the International Red Cross, told AFP.

In Nepal's ruined capital Kathmandu, thousands have spent five nights so far camped out in the cold, crammed into tents without access to safe, clean drinking water and flushing toilets, forced to defecate in the open.

Fear of disease is sweeping through the camps, with the homeless donning surgical masks and even Nepalese Prime Minister Sushil Koirala wearing one as he toured tents trying to reassure terrified families.

"Sanitation and water facilities at these camps is a real concern," Dr Babu Ram Marasini of Nepal's Epidemiology and Disease Control body told AFP.

"It is already the sixth day and we have told the government that if it doesn't act on these issues in the next 48 to 72 hours it will be too late," he warned.

Kathmandu has witnessed an exodus of worried residents returning to rural villages since the 7.8-magnitude quake flattened large areas of the once vibrant city, some fearful that the capital will be gripped by a health epidemic.



Unapologetic Abe 'reunites' rival Korea

AFP, Seoul

In a rare display of political unity, South and North Korea yesterday both condemned Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for failing to apologise during a US visit for the wartime use of sexual slaves.

Their respective foreign ministries each issued statements criticising Abe for distorting history, with Pyongyang comparing the Japanese leader to "psychopaths" and "hooligans".

In a landmark address to a joint session of the US Congress, Abe expressed his "deep remorse" over Japan's actions towards neighbouring Asian nations during World War II.

But he stopped short of a full apology demanded by countries such as China and South Korea, especially over the forced recruitment of so-called "comfort women" to serve Japanese soldiers in military brothels.

"It is very regrettable that Japanese Prime Minister Abe's speech at the US Congress ... lacked a sincere apology," the South Korean foreign ministry said in a statement.

It argued that Abe had missed a golden chance for Japan to foster a fresh spirit of "true reconciliation" with its neighbours.

A North Korean foreign ministry spokesman said Abe's failure to offer a proper apology was an "intolerable" insult to the women who had suffered.

Historians estimate that around 200,000 Asian women, mainly from the Korean peninsula, were forced to work in Japanese military brothels.



Demonstrators march through Times Square during a protest on Wednesday in New York, held in solidarity with demonstrators in Baltimore, Maryland demanding justice for an African-American man who died of severe spinal injuries sustained in police custody. PHOTO: AFP

Thousands protest in US over police 'injustices'

Baltimore mayor keeps curfew in place

AFP, Baltimore

Thousands demonstrated in US East Coast cities Wednesday demanding equal treatment for all by police, after a young African American died of injuries sustained in custody in Baltimore.

The biggest show of people power was in Baltimore itself -- epicenter of the latest racially tinged unrest to convulse the United States -- where several thousand mostly young demonstrators paralyzed city blocks in a major rally through downtown to City Hall.

The mayor of Baltimore said yesterday a nightly curfew will remain in place and will be assessed on a "daily basis" after riots and protests against alleged police brutality in the US city.

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake said keeping the city safe remained her top priority, and that a 10:00 pm to 5:00 am curfew remained in effect until further notice.

"I have made no decision about lifting the curfew. We re-evaluate on a daily basis," she told CNN.

"We're going to make sure that we keep our young people safe. I don't want to lose another

life out on the Baltimore streets because of the violence that has been erupting in our city."

The streets of Baltimore seemed calm on the second night of a citywide curfew.

Thousands more protested in New York, the capital Washington and Boston in solidarity, as simmering anger over alleged police brutality against blacks and discrimination again bubbled to the surface.

The protests were overwhelmingly peaceful and good-natured, although New York police said they had arrested more than 60 demonstrators. Emotions were running high, and scuffles broke out.

What appears to be a growing movement for change was focused on Baltimore, where a rally that started at the main train station included black and white demonstrators, some of them linking arms and chanting: "No justice, no peace! No racists, no peace!"

Many in the march were high school or college students.

"We're protesting the ongoing injustices that police have perpetrated on black men particularly. Police are trigger-happy and we need to stop that," Jonathan Brown, 19, a student at Johns Hopkins University, told AFP.

BOKO ABDUCTIONS
160 hostages rescued

AFP, Kano

Nigerian troops have rescued about 160 more hostages from Boko Haram's Sambisa Forest stronghold in northeast Nigeria, the country's army told AFP yesterday.

"We are still trying to compute the actual number of those rescued. But tentatively there are about 60 women of various ages and around 100 children," said army spokesman Sani Usman.

The latest rescue comes after the military said on Tuesday it had found 200 girls and 93 women kidnapped by the militants and held in the forest.

Usman has said the former hostages did not include the 219 girls snatched from their school on April 14 last year but Nigeria's defence headquarters said it was too early to tell.

YEMEN CRISIS
US asks Iran to help bring parties into talks

REUTERS, Washington

The United States sought Iran's help to bring Yemen's warring parties into talks on a political settlement when US and Iranian foreign ministers met on Monday, a US official said on Wednesday.

Iran is allied with the Houthi militias that took the Yemeni capital Sanaa in September, demanding a more inclusive government. The Shi'ite Houthis have since swept south, unsettling Sunni-ruled oil exporter Saudi Arabia, which fears the spread of Iranian influence in the region.

Asked whether US Secretary of State John Kerry had asked Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad JavadZarif in talks in New York on Monday to use its influence to get all sides into talks, a US State Department official told reporters, "Yes."

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said this meant seeking Iranian help to get the Houthis to negotiate.

Kerry, speaking on Monday before his meeting with Zarif about the Iranian nuclear programme, told reporters that he expected Yemen to attend talks.

"I will certainly urge that everybody do their part to try to reduce the violence and allow the negotiations to begin in a way that will protect the interests of Yemenis," Kerry said.

Lanka's ruling party seeks fresh election

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's minority ruling party urged President Maithripala Sirisena Wednesday to call a snap general election to strengthen its numbers, one day after parliament passed a watered-down political reform package.

The governing United National Party called for the election after the opposition blocked several key reforms, thwarting Sirisena's pledge to return Sri Lanka to a parliamentary-style democracy.

"There is now a necessity for an immediate dissolution of parliament," UNP treasurer Eran Wickramaratne said in a statement.

"The (current) political uncertainty will have dire economic consequences." "The only way out is for the people to be given the chance to decide (at elections)."

Indian girl, 14, jumps off bus to escape molesters, dies

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A 14-year-old girl in India has died and her mother has been seriously injured after they were allegedly thrown from a bus by three men who had tried to sexually assault them.

The incident began when a man on the bus allegedly started harassing the mother and daughter, who were travelling with the girl's 10-year-old brother on a bus in Punjab's Moga district. They complained to the bus driver who joined in with another passenger, according to a report by NDTV.

There are conflicting reports over how the two women came off the bus. NDTV reports that the women were thrown onto the road, while the Times of India claims the women jumped off the moving vehicle in order to escape the men.

The girl was declared dead after being taken to a civil hospital. The



mother was in a critical condition when she arrived but is now believed to be improving. The young boy was reportedly dropped off a short distance away from where the girls were thrown.

"No one helped. They first pushed my daughter off the bus, then me," the girl's mother was quoted as saying.

Three people were arrested over the incident, including the bus driver and a cleaner.