

**NEPAL
QUAKE**

51 bodies found in trekking region

AFP, Kathmandu

Police have found more than 50 bodies, including those of six foreigners, in Nepal's popular Langtang trekking region following last weekend's devastating earthquake, a senior local official said yesterday. Another 100 foreign tourists are still feared to be missing in Langtang in the wake of the 7.8-magnitude quake that struck on April 25 and claimed more than 7,000 lives. EU diplomats said on Friday that around 1,000 European citizens were still unaccounted for in Nepal, although many of those were thought to be safe but out of contact.



Quake damages world's oldest Buddhist shrine

PTI, Kathmandu

Swayambhunath Stupa, believed to be the world's oldest Buddhist shrine, has been partially damaged by Nepal's devastating April 25 earthquake that has killed over 7,000 people. Several monuments situated in the vicinity of the 2,000-year-old Lichchavi-era Buddhist shrine situated on top of a hill in western Kathmandu have been damaged, though the main stupa has remained intact during the 7.9-magnitude earthquake. Three Buddhist monasteries, including Karmapa Bihar, Jyoti Kirti Bihar, Maha Bihar, Shantipur, Pratapur, Anantapur, and Manjushree temple were also damaged by the powerful tremor.



(From left, clockwise) Nepalese people sit near damaged houses after an Indian army helicopter landed to bring relief supplies to Archletar Dhading village in Gorkha district; Soldiers clearing rubble at the damaged Swayambhunath temple in Kathmandu; and UNESCO staff sorting religious and historical artifacts at the temple.



PHOTO: AFP

Quake toll to climb 'much higher'
Says govt, admits thousands yet to receive aid in remote areas

AFP, Kathmandu

The death toll from an earthquake that ripped through Nepal will climb "much higher", the government warned yesterday, as relief teams raced to reach survivors of the disaster that has already claimed more than 7,000 lives. Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat said the toll will jump once teams reached far-flung villages feared flattened in the worst quake to hit the impoverished Himalayan nation in more than 80 years. "There are still villages where we know that all houses have been destroyed, but have not yet been able to reach," Mahat said in a statement. "The aftershocks have not receded and we expect the final casualty numbers to climb much higher," the minister said, as he appealed for hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign donations to help rebuild the devastated country.

The 7.8-magnitude quake wreaked a trail of death and destruction when it erupted around mid-day eight days ago, reducing much of the capital Kathmandu to rubble and triggering a deadly avalanche on Mount Everest. After the government ruled out finding more people buried alive in the ruins of Kathmandu on Saturday, the focus has shifted to delivering food, tents and other relief to thousands in remote areas. In the hardest-hit districts of Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk, almost 90 percent of the mostly stone and mud homes have been destroyed, the United Nations said in its latest situation report. "Our priority now is really to try to reach those people (in remote areas), get immediate assistance to them," the UN's head of humanitarian affairs Valerie Amos said. But Amos said on Saturday that she was worried that the tonnes of foreign aid pouring into Nepal was being held up by red tape. The death toll from the disaster has hit 7,040, according to the Emergency Operations Centre, with more than 14,000 injured. More than 100 were also killed in India and China. The Red Cross has warned of "total devastation" in far-flung places, where whole villages have been destroyed and survivors are sleeping in the open. "Road access is limited. Some remote villages can only be accessed by helicopters," it added. In Kathmandu, tens of thousands of survivors have been living out in the open since the quake, having either lost their homes or fearful that aftershocks could bring teetering buildings to the ground.

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101-yr-old pulled alive from rubble

AFP, Kathmandu

A 101-year-old man was pulled alive from the rubble of his house in Nepal seven days after it collapsed in a deadly earthquake, police said yesterday. Funchu Tamang was rescued on Saturday with only minor injuries and airlifted to a district hospital, local police officer Arun Kumar Singh told AFP. "He was brought to the district hospital in a helicopter. His condition is stable," said Singh in Nuwakot district around 80 kilometres (50 miles) northwest of Kathmandu.

ISIS 'kills 300 Yazidi captives'

BBC ONLINE

Several hundred Yazidi captives have been killed in Iraq by Islamic State (ISIS) militants west of Mosul, Yazidi and Iraqi officials say. A statement from the Yazidi Progress Party said 300 captives were killed on Friday in the Tal Afar district near the city. Iraqi Vice-President Osama al-Nujaifi described the reported deaths as "horrific and barbaric". Thousands of members of the religious minority group were captured last year. It is not clear how they were killed, or why this has happened now, says the BBC's Middle East editor Alan Johnston. Yazidis, whose religion includes elements of several faiths, are considered infidels by ISIS. Thousands fled to the Kurdish-controlled region of northern Iraq after ISIS captured the Yazidi-populated Sinjar district in Nineveh province. Hundreds of men were killed, while some Yazidi women were held and used as sex slaves. The Yazidi Progress Party's statement, quoted by the Kurdish Shafaq News website, condemned the latest incident as a "heinous crime" and called on Iraqi forces to free those still held by ISIS.

**NEWS IN
brief**

Delhi's int'l airport adjudged world's best

IANS, New Delhi

The Indian capital's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) has been adjudged the world's best airport for the year 2014, under the category of handling 25 to 40 million passengers per annum, officials said on Saturday. Airports Council International (ACI) presented the Airport Service Quality (ASQ) award to IGIA at a ceremony of the ACI Asia-Pacific/World Annual General Assembly

Wedding bus fire kills 11 in Pakistan

AFP, Karachi

Eleven people died when a bus carrying a wedding party caught fire after hitting high-voltage power lines in southern Pakistan yesterday, police said. The bus was taking family members back to their village after a wedding party in the town of Dadu in the southern province of Sindh when it struck the power lines. Four women and three children were

Kerry backs justice for Lankan Tamils

AFP, Colombo

US Secretary of State John Kerry ended a visit to Sri Lanka yesterday after pledging support for minority Tamils following decades of ethnic war, a local Tamil politician said. Kerry met heads of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), the main political party from the ethnic minority, a day after holding talks with Sri Lanka's new President Maithripala Sirisena. "He (Kerry) said he will do his best to support us to resolve outstanding issues," TNA lawmaker Suresh Premachandran told AFP after their 30-minute meeting at Kerry's hotel in the capital Colombo. "They (US) will also keep pushing for reconciliation, justice and accountability," he added, referring to alleged war crimes committed by government forces in the final stages of the conflict that ended in May 2009. On Saturday Kerry, whose presence in Colombo marked the island's return to the diplomatic fold, heaped praise on the new administration of Sirisena, who toppled strongman Mahinda Rajapakse at January elections. The diplomat pledged support to ensure "true reconciliation" in Sri Lanka six years after the end of its 37-year Tamil separatist war which claimed at least 100,000 lives. He echoed a longstanding Tamil demand to investigate the cases of thousands who went missing towards the end of the conflict.



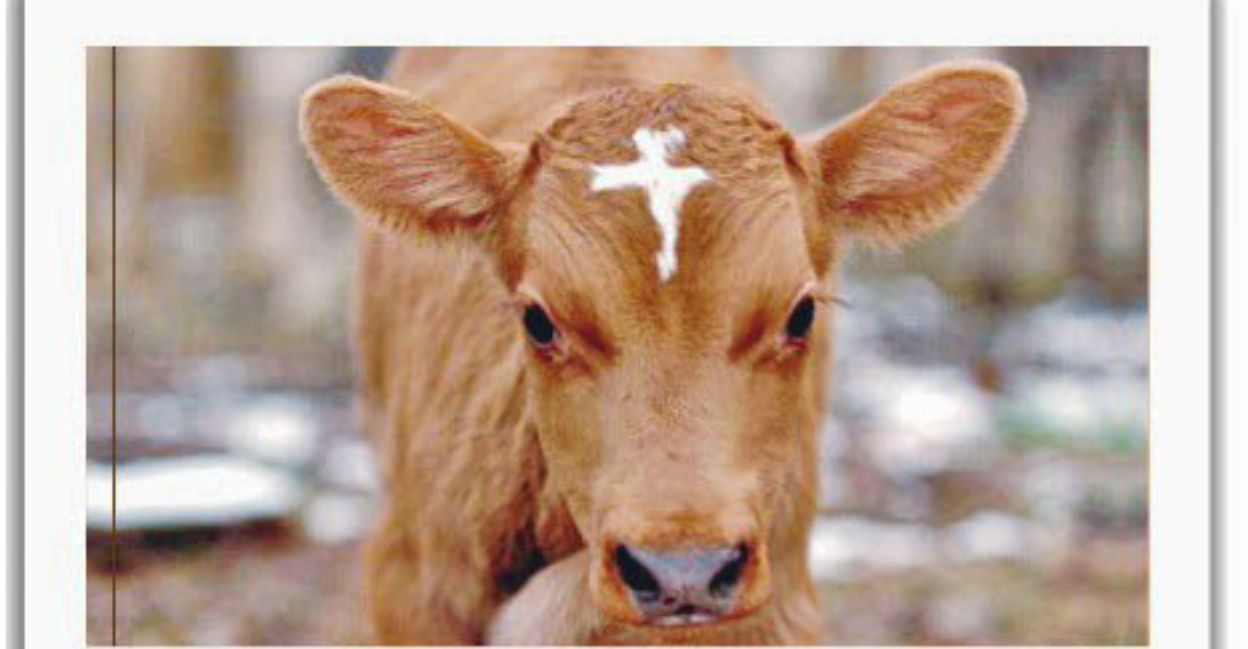
People participate in a dance party on North Ave, a day after Baltimore authorities released a report on the death of Freddie Gray, in Baltimore, Maryland, on Saturday. Marilyn Mosby, Baltimore City state's attorney, ruled the death of Freddie Gray a homicide and that criminal charges would be filed against six Baltimore City Police officers. Gray, 25, was arrested for possessing a switch blade knife on April 12 outside the Gilmor Homes housing project on Baltimore's west side. According to his attorney, Gray died a week later in the hospital from a severe spinal cord injury he received while in police custody.



MUMBAI BLASTS UN assures India over Lakhvi's issue

PTI, United Nations

A United Nations Security Council (UNSC) committee has assured India that it will take up the issue of Mumbai terror attack mastermind Zaki-ur Rehman Lakhvi at its next meeting, after India expressed concern that the LeT commander's release from a Pakistani jail violates the provisions of the UN. India's Ambassador to the UN Asoke Mukerji had written a letter to the Chair of the UNSC al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee Ambassador Jim McLay expressing concern over Lakhvi's release and said it violates the provisions of the committee concerning al-Qaeda and associated individuals and entities. Acknowledging India's concerns, McLay has responded to India's letter and assured that the matter will be discussed at the next meeting of the committee, sources here told PTI. The next meeting of the committee is expected to take place in the next few days. Lakhvi and six others — Abdul Wajid, Mazhar Iqbal, Hamad Amin Sadiq, Shahid Jameel Riaz, Jamil Ahmed and Younis Anjum — have been charged with planning and executing the Mumbai attack in November, 2008 that left 166 people dead. Lakhvi, 55, was arrested in December 2008 and was indicted along with the six others on November 25, 2009 in connection with the 26/11 attack case.



Cow to sit for exam in India!

PTI, Srinagar

In a strange turn of events, a cow was issued an admit card by authorities to write a professional entrance examination next week here. The admit card for the entrance examination for Diploma in Polytechnic was issued by Board of Professional Entrance Examinations (BOPEE) in the name of Kachir Gaaw (Brown Cow) who is supposedly daughter of Gura Dand (Red Bull). The incident came to light after opposition National Conference spokesman Junaid Azim Mattu uploaded a copy of the admit card on social networking site Twitter. "All the applications are now made online. There is an image recognition software which does not differentiate between a human face and an animal picture. Someone has played a prank," Controller Examinations of BOPEE Farooq Ahmad Mir said.

Saudis using US-supplied cluster bombs in Yemen

Accuses HRW; Sanaa admits 'limited' coalition force on ground in Aden

AFP, Dubai

The Saudi-led coalition bombing rebels in Yemen has been using US-supplied cluster munitions in its air campaign, Human Rights Watch said yesterday, warning of the long-term dangers to civilians. The widely banned bombs contain dozens of submunitions, which sometimes do not explode, becoming de facto landmines that can kill or maim long after they were dropped. HRW said it had gathered photographs, video and other evidence indicating that cluster munitions had been used in coalition air strikes against the Huthi rebel stronghold of Saada province in Yemen's northern mountains in recent weeks. Cluster munitions are prohibited by a 2008 treaty adopted by 116 countries, but not by Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners or the United States. "Saudi Arabia and other coalition members -- and the supplier, the US -- are flouting the global standard that rejects cluster munitions because of their long-term threat to civilians." Early in the air campaign that it launched on March 26, Saudi Arabia denied it was using cluster munitions.



HRW said that the munitions used in Yemen appeared to be the CBU-105 Sensor Fuzed Weapons manufactured by the Textron Systems Corporation and supplied to both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates by the United States in recent years. The weapon is banned by the Convention on Cluster Munitions but Washington permits its use and export because it boasts an unexploded ordnance rate of less than one percent. HRW called for that loophole to be closed and for deliveries of the weapons to cease. There has been mounting criticism of the civilian toll from the coalition air campaign now in its sixth week. On April 14, UN human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said recent strikes had hit residential areas and homes across five provinces.