

Darfur clashes leave 83 dead

AFP, Khartoum

Over 80 people have been killed in two days of ongoing clashes in Sudan's restive Darfur, doctors said yesterday, just over two weeks since a long-running peacekeeping mission ended operations.

The violence is the most significant fighting reported since the signing of a peace agreement in October hoped to end years of war in the vast western region, that has left Darfur awash with weapons.

The violence has reportedly pitted non-Arab and Arab tribes in El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur state.

It was reported to have initially started as a local dispute, before quickly morphing into broader fighting involving armed militias. 160 people were also wounded.

Sudanese authorities have imposed a state-wide curfew in West Darfur.

Yesterday, the head of Sudan's ruling body, army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, met top security chiefs to discuss the violence.

Rights groups said the violence hit camps for internally displaced people. "Parts of Kerindig camp were burned, and sustained significant damages forcing people to leave for safe areas," it said in a statement.

On December 31, the hybrid United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) formally ended its operations in the region, 13 years after it came into being.

Fearing deadly violence, Darfur residents held protests in late December against UNAMID's departure.

Darfur was the scene of a bitter conflict that erupted in 2003, leaving around 300,000 people dead and 2.5 million displaced, the United Nations says. The fighting erupted when ethnic minority rebels rose up against the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum, which responded by recruiting and arming a notorious Arab-dominated militia known as the Janjaweed.

US on alert after FBI warning

More than a dozen states deploy National Guard troops fearing violence

AGENCIES

Protesters are expected to descend on statehouses across the United States yesterday in support of baseless claims that electoral fraud robbed President Donald Trump of a second term, as law enforcement officials girded for possible violence.

More than a dozen states have activated National Guard troops to help secure their capitol buildings following an FBI warning of armed protests, with right-wing extremists emboldened by the deadly attack on the US Capitol in Washington on Jan. 6. At least 5 people were killed on that day.

There were scattered demonstrations on Saturday, but statehouses remained mostly quiet. Security officials have eyed yesterday as the first major flashpoint as that is when the anti-government "boogaloo" movement made plans weeks ago to hold rallies in all 50 states.

While many states have erected fences or other barriers to secure their capitols, Texas and Kentucky have taken the further step of closing their capitol grounds to the public.

FBI probing Capitol riot link to foreign govts, groups

Man with gun arrested at Washington security checkpoint

US Justice: no evidence of murder plot in Capitol attack

PLANNED PRO-TRUMP ARMED PROTESTS



The Minnesota National Guard block a roadway ahead of a planned protest by Trump supporters outside the Capitol building in St Paul, Minnesota on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP

It is just days until Wednesday's Inauguration Day, when Democrat Joe Biden will be sworn in amid extraordinary security efforts in Washington, D.C.

The downtown area of the capital was virtually empty on Saturday, with streets near the Capitol closed and battalions of camouflaged National Guard soldiers taking up positions across the city center.

Authorities in Washington said they arrested a man with a loaded handgun and more than 500 rounds of ammunition at a security checkpoint, underscoring the tension in the US capital which is resembling a war zone.

However, the man said it was "an honest mistake," and that he was a private security guard who got lost on his way to work near

the Capitol.

Meanwhile, US Justice Department investigators on Friday they have not found any evidence yet that the rioters who ransacked the US Capitol last week intended to capture and kill any lawmakers.

Yesterday, NBC news reported that the FBI have launched an investigation on whether foreign governments, organisations or individuals provided financial support to people who helped plan and execute the January 6 attack on the Capitol.

As part of the investigation, the FBI is examining payments of \$500,000 in bitcoin, apparently by a French national, to key figures and groups in the far right before the riot, one current and one former FBI official told NBC News.

The Chainalysis blog post, first highlighted by Yahoo News, said far-right podcaster Nick Fuentes received the most money, 13.5 BTC - worth about \$250,000.

Separately, a joint threat assessment issued last week by the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and various other federal and DC-area police agencies noted that since the deadly January 6 riot, "Russian, Iranian, and Chinese influence actors have seized the opportunity to amplify narratives in furtherance of their policy interest amid the presidential transition."

It was not clear whether the ramped up security presence might lead some protesters to stay at home.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Biden aide slams Trump move on Yemen rebels

The outgoing Trump administration's decision to classify Yemen's Huthi rebels as terrorists will only cause more suffering for the people of that war-torn nation, Joe Biden's nominee for national security advisor said Saturday. "Huthi commanders need to be held accountable, but designating the whole organization will only inflict more suffering on Yemeni people and impede diplomacy critical to end the war," Biden's pick for national security advisor, Jake Sullivan, tweeted. The rebels control much of Yemen and have faced an offensive from US ally Saudi Arabia, with millions in Yemen depending on aid to survive.

Guatemala cracks down on US-bound migrant caravan

Guatemalan authorities on Saturday escalated efforts to stop thousands of Hondurans, many of them families with children, traveling in a migrant caravan bound for the United States. Between 7,000 and 8,000 migrants have entered Guatemala since Friday, according to Guatemala's immigration authority, fleeing poverty and violence in a region battered by the pandemic and back-to-back hurricanes in November. Officials in Guatemala said they have prevented most of the caravan. The caravan's next destination is Mexico. Mexico's migration accord with the United States still holds, so the caravan would be dispersed, a Mexican official said.

Navalny detained in Russia



Russian police detained Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny at passport control after he flew home to Russia yesterday. It was the first time Navalny has been back home since he was poisoned last summer. His plane was diverted to another Moscow airport at the last minute in an apparent effort by authorities to thwart journalists and supporters greeting him. Navalny was detained when he showed his passport to border guards before formally entering Russia, Reuters witnesses said. His wife, Yulia, his spokeswoman and his lawyer were allowed to enter Russia. Russian capital's prison service had said beforehand it would do everything to arrest him once he returned, accusing him of flouting the terms of a suspended prison sentence for embezzlement, a 2014 case Navalny says was trumped up.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Locals ride a motorbike past a collapsed house following an earthquake in Mamuju, West Sulawesi province, Indonesia, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Indonesia quake toll hits 81

Torrential rains hamper hunt for survivors trapped under rubbles; thousands left homeless

AFP, Mamuju

Torrential monsoon rains hampered the hunt yesterday for anyone still buried alive under buildings flattened by a powerful earthquake on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, after the huge tremor killed at least 81 and left thousands homeless.

Excavators and cranes were deployed across the devastated seaside city of Mamuju, where buildings were reduced to a tangled mass of twisted metal and chunks of concrete, including a hospital and the regional governor's office.

It was unclear how many people -- dead or alive -- could still be under mountains of debris in the aftermath of Friday's 6.2-magnitude quake.

"The rain poses risks because damaged buildings could collapse if it gets too heavy...and aftershocks could move them too," said rescuer Octavianto.

Excavating debris too fast with heavy equipment could crush and kill any buried survivors, he added. "All the victims we've found so far were dead," said Octavianto, 37, who like many Indonesians goes by one name.

"It is most likely any more victims are already dead if 24 hours has passed," he added.

Scores of rescuers combed through the destruction, filling body bags with corpses, while police on yesterday deployed a K-9 unit of sniffer dogs to help in the search at a badly damaged hospital.

Most victims were found in Mamuju, but some were also recovered south of the city of 110,000 people in West Sulawesi province.

Friday's tremor triggered panic among residents of the island, which was hit by a 2018 quake-tsunami disaster that killed thousands.

Authorities have not given a figure for how many survivors have been rescued. A pair of young sisters plucked from under the mass of concrete and other debris were treated in hospital.

Thousands left homeless by the quake took to makeshift shelters -- many little more than tarpaulin-covered tents filled with whole families.

They said they were running low on food, blankets and other aid, as emergency supplies were rushed to the hard-hit region.

Many survivors were unable to return to their destroyed homes, or were too scared to go back, fearing a tsunami sparked by aftershocks, common after strong earthquakes.

Nations failing to fund climate adaptation: UN

AFP, Paris

The world is falling short of promises made under the Paris climate deal to help the most vulnerable nations deal with the increasingly devastating impacts of climate change, according to the United Nations.

Adaptation -- reducing the fallout among communities and increasing their capacity to deal with climate-related disasters such as floods and drought -- is a pillar of the landmark 2015 accord, which aims to chart a path away from catastrophic warming.

The deal requires signatories to implement adaptation measures through national planning, but also through funding to at-risk countries.

The UN Environment Programme Adaptation Gap report found that the current finance levels of around \$30 billion annually for adaptation fell far short of the annual cost in developing nations of \$70 billion.

It said the true cost of adapting to climate impacts in these nations could be as high as \$300 billion every year by the end of the decade and \$500 billion by mid-century.

"The hard truth is that climate change is upon us," said Inger Andersen, UNEP executive director.

"Its impacts will intensify and hit vulnerable countries and communities the hardest -- even if we meet the Paris Agreement goals of holding global warming this century to well below 2C."

UNEP called for a drastic scale-up of public and private finance for adaptation,



as well as increased investment in nature-based solutions such as protecting and sustainably restoring ecosystems.

Much of the devastation wrought by climate-linked disasters falls on developing nations, and despite promises to help out financially, richer countries still aren't hitting their adaptation funding targets.

UNEP said funding for adaptation currently represented just five percent of all climate finance.

With the cost of natural disasters set to skyrocket this century, hard-hit nations are finding it difficult to secure the finance to rebuild after extreme events.

The UN report found that cutting greenhouse gas emissions will provide a long-term economic benefit by reducing the costs associated with climate change.

Achieving the 2C Paris Agreement temperature rise limit could curb losses in annual growth to 1.6 percent, compared with 2.2 percent for 3C of warming -- the current trajectory if nations' current Paris pledges are upheld.

MAMMOTH VACCINATION DRIVE

India sees 'encouraging' first day

AFP, New Delhi

India's Covid-19 vaccination drive had a successful start with more than 190,000 people receiving their first jabs and no one hospitalised for major side effects, the health ministry said yesterday, but reports emerged about concerns over the homegrown vaccine.

Authorities have given emergency-approval for two vaccines -- Oxford-AstraZeneca and the homegrown "Covaxin", which has yet to complete its Phase 3 trials -- and plans to immunise some 300 million people in the country of 1.3 billion by July.

Officials had hoped to inoculate 300,000 people on Saturday but said glitches with an app used to coordinate and monitor the process meant not all potential recipients were alerted.

India has the world's second-largest known caseload with more than 10.5 million coronavirus infections and over 152,000 deaths so far.



Frontline workers such as hospital staff, people over 50 and those deemed to be at high risk due to pre-existing medical conditions are on the shortlist to receive the vaccines.

"We have got encouraging and satisfactory feedback results on the first day," Health Minister Harsh Vardhan told his state counterparts on Saturday.

"This vaccine will indeed be a 'Sanjeevani' (life saver) in the fight against the virus, he added.

The health ministry said "no case of post-vaccination hospitalisation" had been reported, although local media said a security guard at the country's top-ranked public hospital, the All

India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi, had developed an allergic reaction shortly after getting his shot.

However, Delhi Health Minister Satyender Jain said that there have been 51 cases of minor complications reported from the coronavirus vaccine.

A doctors' representative body at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in New Delhi wrote a letter asking for the Oxford-AstraZeneca "Covishield" vaccine to be supplied instead of Covaxin to allay any fears.

Vaccine hesitancy has emerged as a major concern, with a recent survey of 18,000 people across India finding that 69 percent were in no rush to get a shot.

Leading scientists and doctors have called on authorities to release efficacy data about Covaxin to boost confidence about the vaccine.

Covaxin recipients on Saturday had to sign a consent form that stated its "clinical efficacy... is yet to be established".

Israel okays new W Bank settler homes

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel yesterday advanced plans for 780 new settler homes in the occupied West Bank, settlement watchdog Peace Now said, adding the move puts Israel "on a collision course" with the incoming US administration.

Right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had last week directed authorities to approve construction of the units in occupied Palestinian territories.

That came less than two weeks before President Donald Trump's pro-settler administration was due to leave office.

All Jewish settlements in the West Bank are regarded as illegal by much of the international community.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
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Balaganj, Sylhet
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Memo No. 46.02.000.9108.14.057.19-599

Date: 17/01/2021

Tender Notice

Tender Notice No. 02/2020-2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works as stated below:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID No.	Tender method
1	eTender/PEDP4/SLT/BAI/2019-20/W2.01719	Construction of additional classroom Dattapur GPS under PEDP4	538115	NOTM
2	eTender/PEDP4/SLT/BAI/2019-20/W2.00822	Construction of additional classroom Dakkhin Goharpur GPS under PEDP4	538101	NOTM
3	eTender/PEDP4/SLT/BAI/2019-20/W2.00820	Construction of additional classroom of Uttar Sojan Nagor GPS under PEDP4	510395	NOTM
4	eTender/PEDP4/SLT/BAI/2019-20/W2.01717	Construction of additional classroom Monoharpur GPS under PEDP4	510393	NOTM
5	eTender/PEDP4/SLT/BAI/2019-20/W2.01718	Construction of additional classroom Isapur GPS under PEDP4	510391	NOTM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited through online at any branches of registered bank upto 03/02/2021 14:00.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). The Tender Notice will be available on the website: www.lged.gov.bd

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GD-108