

TROPICAL STORM

45 killed

Death toll to expected to rise

AFP, Manila

Severe Tropical Storm Nalgae whipped the Philippines yesterday after unleashing flash floods and landslides that officials said left at least 45 people dead.

Nalgae pounded the archipelago nation's main island of Luzon with maximum winds of 95 kilometres an hour after making landfall on the sparsely populated Catanduanes island before dawn.

The destruction began well before, with heavy rain inundating mostly rural areas on the southern island of Mindanao on Thursday, followed by deadly landslides and flooding on Friday.

But officials also said the death toll could rise sharply.

"It could be more than a hundred," Lester Sinsuat, the mayor of Datu Odin Sinsuat town, told AFP when asked how many are feared dead.



The bodies of victims, believed to have suffered from cardiac arrest, are covered with sheets in the popular nightlife district of Itaewon in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday. The number of deaths reported from a stampede in a central district of the South Korean capital Seoul has risen to 120, a fire official said.

PHOTO: AFP

US MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Democracy is at stake, says Obama

AFP, Washington

Former US president Barack Obama said Friday that democracy is at stake in next month's midterm elections in the United States, as he hit his first stop on the campaign trail.

The Democratic power player, who remains a hugely popular figure in his party, told a boisterous rally in Georgia that everyone had to get out and vote to prevent election conspiracy theorists getting their hands on the levers of power.

"It's not enough to elect Democrats at the top of the ticket," a fired-up Obama told the crowd in the suburbs of Atlanta.

"We need to elect good people up and down the ballot. Across the country, some of the folks who tried to undermine our democracy are running for offices that will oversee the next election.

"And if they win, there's no telling what might happen."

Obama, who has kept a relatively low profile since leaving office in 2017, was guest of honor at the rally in Georgia, where two extremely close contests, fueled by tens of millions of dollars, are captivating America.

Americans have already begun voting in elections that will decide control of both houses of Congress, as well as who gets the governors' mansions in dozens of states.

Hundreds of other positions at county and state level will also be decided in the November 8 polls.

'Today is last day of riots'

Iran's Guards head warns Masha Amini protesters

REUTERS

The head of Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guards yesterday warned protesters that would be their last day of taking to the streets, in a sign that security forces may intensify their fierce crackdown on unrest sweeping the country.

Iran has been gripped by protests since the death of 22-year-old Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini in the custody of the morality police last month, posing one of the boldest challenges to the clerical leadership since the 1979 revolution.

"Do not come to the streets! Today is the last day of the riots," Guards commander Hossein Salami said in some of the toughest language used in the crisis, which Iran's clerical leadership blames on its foreign enemies including Israel

and the United States.

"This sinister plan, is a plan hatched ... in the White House and the Zionist regime," Salami said.

Iranians have defied such warnings throughout the popular revolt in which women have played a prominent role. There were more reports of fresh bloodshed yesterday.

Human rights group Hengaw reported security forces shooting students at a girl's school in the city of Saqez.

In another post it said security forces opened fire on students at Kurdistan University of Medical Science, in the Kurdistan provincial capital of Sanandaj.

Several students were injured, one of them shot in the head, Hengaw said.

Reuters could not verify this report.

The widely feared Revolutionary

Guards, who report directly to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, have not been deployed since demonstrations began last month. They are an elite force with a track record of crushing dissent.

Rights groups have said at least 250 protesters have been killed and thousands arrested across Iran in the protests.

On Friday, video footage on social media showed protesters calling for the death of Khamenei and the Basij militia, which has played a major role in efforts to quell demonstrations.

The Intelligence Ministry and the intelligence arm of the Revolutionary Guards have accused spy agencies from the United States, Britain, Israel and Saudi Arabia of having orchestrated the unrest to destabilise the Islamic Republic.

The United States will next week put the United Nations spotlight on the Iran protests and look for ways to promote credible, independent investigations into Iranian human rights abuses.



Media jeopardised

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This prompted the ministry of foreign affairs to issue a rejoinder, terming the news quoting Momen as misleading and baseless.

"This is very unfortunate and unexpected," the ministry said, while asking the media outlets to retract the news and run the correct version of Momen's speech.

Hilsa fishing

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Gazipur on my truck," said Azizul Haque, a truck driver.

The 22-day government ban on hilsa catching, selling, hoarding and transporting came into effect on October 7, with a view to boosting its production.

The ban covered hilsa sanctuaries in six districts—Barishal, Chandpur, Lakshmipur, Bhola, Shariatpur, and Patuakhali.

During the ban, around 50,000 fishermen remained unemployed and were allocated 25kg of rice each, which was not enough for them, said the local fishermen.

Taukir Ahmed, an official from the control room of the district fisheries office, said around 212 fishermen were sent to jail during the ban period in 178 cases.

Besides, 41,855 metres of current nets were seized and destroyed, said the head of Chandpur Naval Police Md Kamruzzaman.

8-year-old boy

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El Capitan stands at more than 3,000 feet from valley ground, according to the Yosemite National Park website.

And throughout the four-day climb, Joe expected his son would cry "because it's hard. It's emotional, but he has been tough and worked through it."

Ranga may lose parliament

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During a hearing, Latif claimed the AL's decision to expel him from the party was a mistake, while the AL requested the commission to scrap his membership following the Representation of the People Order (RPO) as he was elected MP under the party's electoral symbol.

The matter went to the Supreme Court as Latif filed an appeal challenging the EC's decision to hold a hearing. The SC upheld a High Court order that scrapped Latif's appeal challenging the EC's decision to hold the hearing.

Following all these, on September 1, Latif resigned.

According to Article 70 of the constitution, "A person elected as a member of parliament at an election at which he was nominated as a candidate by a political party shall vacate his seat if he resigns from that party or votes in parliament against that party.

"The lawmaker, however, shall not thereby be disqualified for subsequent election as a member of parliament."

Tension between GM Quader and Raushan Ershad took a new height after Ranga was relived from his party for "siding with opposition leader Raushan Ershad and criticising Quader recently."

Ranga, in a discussion organised

by the Raushan group, on October 23, vowed to oust Quader and the party's Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnur from the party.

The fresh conflict between Quader and Raushan, wife of former president and JP founder HM Ershad, started brewing when she suddenly, on August 31, convened the party's 10th council for November 26.

JP Parliamentary Party, at a meeting on September 1, decided to remove Raushan from the post of the opposition leader.

A letter signed by Ranga was also submitted to the Speaker urging her to make Quader the opposition leader. At present, Quader is the deputy opposition leader.

In recent days, Quader has been heavily criticising the government.

Aggrieved by his criticism, the ruling Awami League high-ups are allegedly backing the pro-Raushan group to put pressure on Quader, said sources.

On September 14, Quader relieved Ranga from all positions including the post of presidium member of JP for siding with Raushan Ershad.

Raushan, who is being treated at a Bangkok hospital for around eight months, is likely to return home early next months, sources close to Raushan said.

She is considered to have a close relation with AL chief Sheikh Hasina.

UK blew up Nord Stream

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responsibility for the damage were "stupid" and Russian officials have said Washington had a motive as it wants to sell more liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Europe.

The United States has denied involvement.

The Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines have a joint annual capacity of 110 billion cubic metres - more than half of Russia's normal gas exports volumes.

Russia yesterday said that the accelerated deployment of modernised US B61 tactical nuclear weapons at Nato bases in Europe would lower the "nuclear threshold"

and that Russia would take the move into account in its military planning.

Russia has around 2,000 working tactical nuclear weapons while the United States has around 200 such weapons, half of which are at bases in Italy, Germany, Turkey, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Politico reported on Oct. 26 that the United States told a closed Nato meeting this month that it would accelerate the deployment of a modernised version of the B61, the B61-12, with the new weapons arriving at European bases in December, several months earlier than planned.

ATTACK ON PELOSI'S SPOUSE

Man arrested faces multiple charges

REUTERS, San Francisco

A man who clubbed US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband over the head with a hammer, shouting, "Where is Nancy?," faced charges of attempted murder and other felonies a day after the violent break in at the couple's San Francisco home. Police initially declined to offer a motive for Friday's attack on Paul Pelosi, 82, who according to his wife's office underwent surgery for a skull fracture and injuries to his right arm and hands, though doctors expect a full recovery. The 82-year-old House speaker herself was in Washington during the assault. Police identified the man arrested at the scene by officers who intervened in the attack as David Depape, 42. He, too, was taken to a San Francisco hospital. Online sheriff's records showed he was booked into custody on suspicion of attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, elder abuse, battery, burglary, and several other felonies. Formal charges were expected to be filed by the San Francisco district attorney's office.

Oldest Guantanamo Bay prisoner released

AFP, Islamabad

A Pakistani known for being the oldest detainee at the US-run Guantanamo Bay detention facility in Cuba was released to his home country yesterday, the South Asian country's foreign ministry said. The secretive US military prison once housed hundreds of suspected militants captured by US forces during America's so-called "war on terror" following the 9/11 attacks by al-Qaeda in 2001. Businessman Saif Ullah Paracha was detained in 2003 in Thailand and accused of financing the jihadist group, but he has maintained his innocence and claimed a love for the United States. Like most detainees at Guantanamo, Paracha — aged 75 or 76 — was never formally charged and had little legal power to challenge his detention.

BRAZIL PRESIDENTIAL RUN-OFF

Trump backs 'great' Bolsonaro

AFP, Washington

Former US president Donald Trump on Friday hailed Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro as a "great" leader and called on Brazilians to vote him in for another term. "VOTE for President JAIR BOLSONARO — HE WILL NEVER LET YOU DOWN!!!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. Trump called Sunday's runoff election a "big day for Brazil." He hit out at Bolsonaro's opponent, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, calling him "a Radical Left Lunatic who will quickly destroy your Country." Bolsonaro and Lula da Silva traded barbs late on Friday in their final televised debate. Polls suggest Lula is the slight favorite to come back for a third term. But Bolsonaro outperformed opinion polls in the first-round vote this month, and many analysts say the election could go either way.

146 killed, 150 injured

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the stampede, with the police on hand in anticipation of the Halloween event at times having trouble maintaining control of the crowds.

Social media footage showed hundreds of people packed in the narrow, sloped alley crushed and immobile as emergency officials and police tried to pull them to free.

Other footage showed chaotic scenes of fire officials and citizens treating dozens of people who appeared to be unconscious.

A Reuters witness said a make-shift morgue was set up in a building

adjacent to the scene. About four dozen bodies were carried out later on wheeled stretchers and moved to a government facility to identify the victims, according to the witness.

It was the first Halloween event in three years after the country lifted Covid restrictions and social distancing. Some witnesses described the crowd becoming increasingly unruly and agitated as the evening deepened.

The Itaewon district is popular with young South Koreans and expatriates alike, its dozens of bars and restaurants packed yesterday

for Halloween after businesses had suffered a sharp decline over three years of the pandemic.

"You would see big crowds at Christmas and fireworks...but this was several ten-folds bigger than any of that," Park Jung-hoon, 21, told Reuters from the scene.

Curfew on bars and restaurants and a limit of 10 people for private gatherings were lifted in April. An outdoor mask mandate was dropped in May.

President Yoon Suk-yeol presided over an emergency meeting with senior aides.

Govt working on exit plan for them

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the process of debt restructuring in distressed companies.

"The promoters of the company, if they have defrauded the banks, they should be penalised as per the laws but the company must not be made to suffer. The means of production must be allowed to function. We are working on something similar here."

The banking laws are likely to be amended to allow exit points for such types of defaulters, said Rahman, also the chairman of IFIC Bank.

"Bankruptcy is a big problem. It is not a problem limited to Bangladesh," he said at the seminar styled "The Role of PPP in Achieving Vision 2041".

Rahman, also the vice-chairman of Beximco Group, called for public-private partnership in all sectors.

He went on to cite the contentious rental power plants as a success story of the PPP model in Bangladesh.

As much as 54 percent of Bangladesh's power generation comes from the private sector.

When Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina came to power in 2009, she decided to involve the private sector to boost the country's power generation.

To facilitate this, the government introduced the Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provisions) Act in 2010.

"After solving the power [shortage] problems, we were able to accelerate our economic growth. This was possible due to the privatisation in the power sectors."

There is no alternative to such models to achieve Vision 2041, he added.

FBCCI President Md. Jashim Uddin, however, expressed concern about the PPP model as "there is a lack of trust between the government and private investors".

"Still now, we [the public sector] see the private partners as contractors only," said Muhammad Ibrahim, chief executive officer of the PPP Authority.

Bangladesh, Zimbabwe meet

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scenarios. Advanced to Group 2 as champions from the first round, Zimbabwe have so far won three of their four completed matches in the tournament. Their last win, a one-run victory, was against favourites Pakistan and the Sikandar Raza-inspired Zimbabwe will hope to only build on that and make their case stronger for a place in the semifinals.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh's T20 World Cup campaign was jolted by a record 104-run loss to South Africa in their previous game in Sydney.

Bangladesh, however, had begun the tournament with a win over the Netherlands, which was also the Tigers' first victory at the Super 12 stage at the T20 World Cup.

And Shakib Al Hasan's side will look to bounce back, even though they will surely not be the favourites going into this tie.

"The wicket looks like a typical Gabba wicket. It'll have good pace, bounce and carry. Maybe a little bit of initial movement early on, but I think a very good batting wicket with a fast outfield that would have value

for shots. If you can time the ball into pockets, it'll be a good game, a high-scoring, 160, 170 kind of game," Bangladesh technical consultant Sridharan Sriram predicted how the pitch might behave today.

There will be concerns for Bangladesh in the batting department, which has not been firing consistently in recent times. And with the way Zimbabwe defended a modest 130 against Pakistan, the Tigers will need to be at their very best with the willow if they are to take all two points from this encounter.