

# News Digest

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PAGE 2

## Aftershocks plague Afghanistan

GHANJI, Afghanistan (AP) — There aren't enough men left alive to dig graves for all the dead in this village. It's hard to tell this even was once a village.

About 2,000 of the 5,000 people who called the steep stretch of brown hillside home are presumed dead, crushed in an earthquake by the bricks they formed with their hands from the mountain soil.

Rescuers in jeeps and on donkeys reached a handful of villages in northeast Afghanistan with desperately needed aid Tuesday. But another in an almost daily series of strong aftershocks struck in the aftermath of a devastating 6.1 magnitude quake Feb. 4.

Estimates of death tolls range from 3,000 to 5,000.

In Ghanji, the bodies that have been found were hastily buried. The cemetery is spiked with crude sticks marking new graves, each holding about 10 bodies.

Piles of crumbled mud bricks that once were houses are melting in the cold rain and washing slowly downhill.

Survivors, like Abdul Romon, huddled in crude tents in front of the ruins of their homes.

"The first quake destroyed us," the 34-year-old said, watching his children try to warm themselves at a campfire. "But there have been three more quakes since then. We're still waiting for more."

Romon's brother and his brother's two children were killed, but Romon has

little time to mourn. He has to feed his own seven children. The ovens that once baked the village's bread have turned into muddy rubble.

Corpses of cows, goats and donkeys lie everywhere, their deaths robbing villagers of food and transport.

Fatmi Niso, 55, lost her son and four grandchildren. She squatted Tuesday on a pile of mud bricks.

"Everything we had is under this rubble," she said quietly, still in shock.

Of the 27 remote villages destroyed in the quake, only two have roads. Ghanji is one of them.

But the road is little more than a footpath. It took rescue workers nearly a week to get here, and now that they've arrived there's little they can do.

"We have nowhere to shelter these people," says Sheila Hall, a medical coordinator with Doctors Without Borders.

The temperature is about 40 degrees — warm enough to turn the snow to torrential rain and cold enough to make life in an unheated tent dangerous.

Meanwhile, fresh snow Tuesday blanketed the only airstrip within miles of the quake zone — in Hajjagar — forcing the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to cancel relief flights.

But a convoy of trucks from the World Food Program reached the quake zone Tuesday after a tortuous two-day, 72-mile journey, carrying nearly 20 tons of food, blankets, tents and cooking

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ABDUL ROMON  
earthquake survivor

stoves.

Villagers whose donkeys survived are trying to get out. Many set out on the daylong walk for Rustaq, the regional center 12 miles away that escaped the worst of the quake.

The trip is not easy. In several places the road passes through land cracked and buckled like old timber by the quake.

Heading the opposite direction, residents of Rustaq piled their donkeys high with bread and traveled to Ghanji to offer what they could. There are no cars.

Unlike in most of Afghanistan, women are visible everywhere in Ghanji. Most villagers are devout Muslims, and women rarely left the house before the quake.

But now they have no houses.

Private tragedies have become public spectacles. Miro Mhat, 25, was found Tuesday under his crumbled home, crushed but still breathing. Rescuers brought him into town as his

wife, veiled from head to foot, shook silently and wept.

Doctors said he was not expected to survive.

Aid agencies raised their death toll estimate to more than 3,000 after seeing the devastation. Afghan officials put the number closer to 5,000.

The new tremor Tuesday killed at least 11 and destroyed two more villages, said Masood Khalili, Afghanistan's ambassador to India. Indian seismologists said it registered at magnitude-5.

There were also fears that Afghanistan's civil war would disrupt relief efforts. On Saturday, the Taliban Islamic army, which controls 85 percent of Afghanistan, announced a unilateral three-day cease-fire to ease earthquake aid.

Officials from the opposition alliance that controls the remaining 15 percent of the country — including Rustaq — said it was not clear if the cease-fire would be extended.

## Supernova remnant brightens

WASHINGTON (AP) — An exploding star that lighted up the southern sky in 1987 and then dimmed is starting to brighten again as its high-speed blast wave creates a ring of fire.

Though not visible from the ground, astronomers said Tuesday, the increasing brightness of the supernova remnant is clearly visible in images taken by the Hubble Space Telescope. They said light from the ring of fire should intensify over the next 10 years.

"This is the first spark of some stellar fireworks that will take place over the next few years," said Robert P. Kirshner, a Harvard astronomer.

The exploding star, known as Supernova 1987A, was first sighted on Feb. 23, 1987, in ground telescope photo images of the Large Magellanic Cloud, a small galaxy of stars 167,000 light years from Earth. The star is visible only from the Southern Hemisphere.

It's believed the star was a red supergiant, 20 times the mass of the sun, that reached the end of its lifetime and exploded, heating instantly to 10 billion degrees.

High speed particles, called neutrinos, raced out from the explosion and lighted up a disk of gas that is thought to have earlier formed a ring 100 billion miles around the star.

The glow from the explosion faded slowly, but a shock wave of energy, moving at about 40 million miles an hour, is now beginning to smash into the ring of gas. The violence of the collision is heating the gas to millions of degrees and setting it aglow.

Supernova 1987A is the brightest exploding star seen from Earth since 1604. By following each step of the violent process, astronomers say they will learn more about the final stages of stellar evolution.

"We get to be witnesses to an event that promises to tell us a lot about the death throes of a star," said Kirshner.

Richard McCray, an astronomer at the University of Colorado said that what became Supernova 1987A probably evolved from a twin-star system that merged into a single object. The merger process caused the formation of the invisible ring of gas that is now being lighted up by the shock wave of the explosion, he said.

"The ring is putting on a display the likes of which have not been seen for centuries," said McCray.

In the center of the ring is what Kirshner called "the shredded remains of a massive star."

Anne L. Kinney of the Space Telescope Institute said astronomers are fascinated by the inner workings of a supernova because it is believed that such explosions helped create and distribute all the heavy elements.

Early in the universe, she said, there were only hydrogen and helium, the elements that burn in the nuclear fusion fires of stars. As a star burns and evolves, it creates heavier elements, such as iron, oxygen and carbon, that are essential to life. When a large star burns all its hydrogen and helium, it can collapse and explode into a supernova that spews out the heavy elements.

"Supernovae fertilize the galaxies with this enriched material," said Kinney.

## CBO says surplus is likely

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said Tuesday that a federal surplus is likely this year if the economy keeps pumping huge piles of tax dollars into government coffers.

If true, that means that the economy would achieve in fiscal 1998 what President Clinton has proposed doing in fiscal 1999 — producing the first federal surplus in three decades. Congressional Republicans, who have yet to write their own spending plan, are sure to also propose a surplus for 1999. Fiscal 1998 runs through Sept. 30.

CBO based its forecast on revenue and spending figures from the Treasury Department. CBO said it expected a \$22 billion surplus for January, which would bring the deficit for the first four months of fiscal 1998 to \$17.7 billion. That would be \$28.2 billion below the level for the first four months of 1997, a year that ended with a \$21 billion deficit.

Clinton hailed the CBO figures Tuesday while speaking to House Democrats gathered in Wintergreen, Va., for a strategy retreat, said administration officials. He attributed the improving budget to his work with congressional Democrats, who without any Republican votes passed a near \$500 billion, five-year deficit-cutting package in 1993.

Clearly not responsible for this year's improved fiscal performance is the budget-balancing deal Clinton and Congress enacted last summer. That package, which was aimed at balancing the budget in 2002, increased spending and cut taxes in 1998 and added more than \$20 billion to this year's deficit.

## Lewinsky's mother to testify

WASHINGTON (AP) — Monica Lewinsky's mother was summoned before a grand jury Tuesday for questioning about an alleged presidential affair and cover-up as her daughter's lawyer suggested the former White House intern would testify herself if forced to under court order.

"She has no intention of falling on her sword," attorney William Ginsburg said of Lewinsky, who is scheduled to testify on Thursday. Ginsburg, however, continued to insist that Whitewater prosecutor Kenneth Starr go through with a deal to grant Lewinsky total immunity from prosecution.

The former White House intern "will appear before the grand jury whenever she is ordered to appear before the grand jury," Ginsburg told reporters in California. "She will not defy either a federal court order or a subpoena."

Lewinsky's mother, Marcia Lewis, spent nearly three hours before the grand jury after being ordered to testify by U.S. District Judge Norma Holloway

Johnson. She was expected to return for more testimony today.

"Part of what she is feeling is a lot of pain for her daughter," said her lawyer, Billy Martin.

Lewis is a New Yorker who rented a Watergate apartment in Washington where her daughter lived while working at the White House and Pentagon.

Lewinsky confided to her mother about the alleged presidential affair, according to several individuals familiar with the relationship between mother and daughter.

Lewis also was in constant contact with her daughter over the past two months, when Lewinsky was trying to figure out how to avoid testifying in the Paula Jones sexual harassment lawsuit against the president, the sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

In some secretly tape-recorded telephone conversations, Lewinsky would put her friend Linda Tripp on hold and consult with Lewis, then come back on the line with Tripp to relate her mother's advice, according to individuals famil-

iar with the tapes.

Ginsburg said Lewinsky is "absolutely mortified" to have her family entangled in the investigation.

"It's a terrible thing to have her mother dragged into this," Ginsburg said. He added "it seems like they were trying to squeeze us by interrogating the brother" of Lewinsky, who was questioned by FBI agents at his fraternity house in Pennsylvania last week.

Ginsburg said Lewinsky, faced with an order to testify on Thursday, would "do what she has to do given the situation she finds herself in. She will not go to jail like Susan McDougal." McDougal has been jailed for contempt since September 1996 for refusing to testify in the Whitewater investigation.

Ginsburg told reporters he would come to Washington on Thursday or Friday.

Asked whether Lewinsky would invoke her Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination and refuse to answer questions, he said, "Oh, come on."

## Alcohol offenders could lose aid

Cavalier Daily  
University of Virginia

Charlottesville, Va. (U-WIRE) — Students may start thinking twice before ordering that second round of drinks because their behavior could cost them a chance at in-state tuition or financial aid, or worse.

In a statewide effort to curb alcohol abuse on college campuses, two bills now proposed in the state General Assembly — one in the House and one in the Senate — propose revoking in-state tuition and suspending financial aid or enrollment for students convicted of alcohol or drug offenses.

Last semester, there were four alcohol-related deaths at public colleges in Virginia, including the death of fourth-

year college student Leslie Ann Baltz. Baltz, who was intoxicated and left unattended, died in a fall during the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Schools nationwide continue to experience similar alcohol-related injuries and fatalities. The Massachusetts Institute for Technology, for instance, banned on-campus alcohol in response to an alcohol-related death last year.

If passed, the first bill in the assembly, proposed by Republican James K. O'Brien, would revoke the in-state tuition status of a student convicted of a crime involving alcohol, controlled substances or marijuana for up to one year.

The second, suggested by Republican Sen. Emmett W. Hanger Jr.,

calls for the suspension of state-supported financial aid or student suspension due to alcohol abuse.

"When we've directed so much of our resources to state colleges and universities — both time and money — (underage drinking) needs to be dealt with so we don't waste money," Hanger said. "It can destroy a learning environment."

Some University officials said, however, that the bills may prove counter-productive.

"They would create more problems than (they) would solve," said William W. Harmon, vice president for student affairs. "The worst thing you could do would be to take away organization" from a person confronting substance-abuse problems, Harmon said.