

NEWS DIGEST

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Turkey death toll rises to 450

■ As cold temperatures linger, likelihood of finding survivors goes down, rescuers say.

DUZCE, Turkey (AP) — Families made homeless by a shattering earthquake gathered scrap wood for campfires Monday as temperatures plunged into the teens, while rescuers warned that the cold decreased the chances of finding anyone alive in the wreckage.

The death toll from Friday's quake rose to 450; survivors struggled to find food and shelter and rebuild their lives.

Jean-Phillipe Jutzi of Swiss Rescue said that after the freezing temperatures of the past three nights, many people trapped in the rubble must have died of hypothermia.

"It would be a miracle" if anyone survived, he said.

International rescuers were scheduled to meet Monday to decide whether to put an end to rescue operations. Teams from about 20 countries are searching the area, including a group from Fairfax, Va.

President Clinton, who met with Turkish President Suleyman Demirel on Monday, said Washington has sent tents for 10,000 people.

"The United States is proud to stand with Turkey in good times or bad," he said.

Clinton, who is on a state visit, plans a trip today to a tent city set up by U.S.

Marines in August after another devastating earthquake destroyed thousands of homes.

Fear of a third deadly quake has kept survivors from moving back to their homes, turning Duzce, a farming town of 80,000, into a huge tent city.

For three nights, Abdullah Ayyildiz has been sleeping in his car with his wife and newborn baby.

"I am trying to find a tent," he said. "I hope the crisis center will give us one today."

With temperatures plunging as low as 18 degrees, it is becoming a necessity.

Like Ayyildiz, many people have been sleeping in their cars. Others lie on blankets distributed by authorities near campfires. Scores of trucks distributed bread, and soup kitchens served hot meals to thousands of people three times a day.

Dr. Bedri Bilge, who set up a first-aid tent in the garden of Duzce's meteorological institute, warned of the risk of diseases — especially upper respiratory infections — spreading among survivors if they did not find warm shelter soon.

"Authorities also need to secure toilets and clean water for personal hygiene, or we will start seeing gastrointestinal diseases," Bilge said.

In the garden, where more than 50 families gathered, 4-year-old Ismail Kara dragged a small branch lying in the garden and threw it on his family's campfire. His sisters held out their hands to warm their freezing fingers.



NEWSMAKERS
PEOPLE WAIT for rescue help in front of a collapsed apartment block in the town of Duzce in Northwestern Turkey. The people shown, who did not want to be named, said a relative's family lived in the apartment block, which collapsed in the 7.2-magnitude quake Friday. Cold weather is hampering rescue operations, which are still not fully under way.

Many families set traditional Turkish teapots on smaller fires, and offered hot drinks to cold passers-by.

Hundreds of tents had been set up in the area after the Aug. 17 quake that killed 17,000 people, hundreds of them in Duzce. Many people had moved back home last week, leaving the tent cities half empty.

Monday, they were overcrowded.

Meanwhile, residents continued streaming out of the city. Hundreds have already left. The streets were filled with

furniture taken out from seriously damaged buildings.

"I'm terrified of going back in. But I can't just leave it there," said Hava Yuksel, taking out everything she could reach from her half-crushed ground-floor apartment.

For those who remained, some shops did reopen. A dozen regular customers ventured into Metin Bas' tea house in a back street of Duzce.

But most of Duzce, from banks to pharmacies, remained shut down.

School-prayer case heads to high court

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court re-entered the emotional debate over school prayer Monday, agreeing to decide whether public schools can let students lead group invocations at high school football games.

A Galveston County, Texas, school board is asking the justices to overturn a lower court ruling that said student-led prayers over the public-address system at football games violate the constitutionally required separation of church and state.

"The school district is not causing prayer or endorsing prayer if it leaves to the student the choice of what to say," school district lawyer Lisa A. Brown said after the nation's highest court granted review. "There's a long tradition in many states of having this pre-game ceremony of having a moment of reflection before the game begins."

But the Rev. Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State contended such

prayers at officially sponsored school events violate the Constitution.

"The school's giving you the microphone; it will sound like an officially sanctioned religious statement and that's what has no place at a high-school football game," Lynn said.

The Supreme Court's decision, expected by late June, could help clarify the jumbled state of the law surrounding school prayer.

The justices' last major school-prayer ruling, in 1992, barred clergy-led prayers at public school graduation ceremonies. "The Constitution forbids the state to exact religious conformity from a student as the price of attending her own high school graduation," the court said then.

The ruling was viewed by many as a strong reaffirmation of the highest court's 1962 decision banning organized, officially sponsored prayers from public schools.

But in 1993, the justices let stand a

“The school's giving you the microphone; it will sound like an officially sanctioned religious statement.”

REV. BARRY LYNN

federal appeals court ruling in a Texas case that allowed student-led prayers at graduations. That ruling, which also applies to Louisiana and Mississippi, conflicts with another federal appeals court decision barring student-led graduation prayers in nine Western states.

Four students and their parents sued the Santa Fe Independent School District in 1995, seeking to end student-led prayers over the public-address system at home football games in the Houston suburb. The district's policy allows students to give an "invocation" or "message."

The students also challenged the district's policy of allowing student-led prayers at graduations, but the Supreme Court said its review will be limited to the issue of prayers at football games.

A federal judge allowed student-led prayers at football games if students were told to keep them "nonsectarian and non-proselytizing." The case does not involve prayers in locker rooms.

A three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed and said student-led prayers at high school football games are always out of bounds.

Negotiators for U.S., China agree to clear trade barriers

BEIJING (AP) — After 13 years of fitful talks and six days of grueling bargaining, Chinese and U.S. negotiators signed a breakthrough agreement Monday that would remove trade barriers and clear the biggest hurdle to China's entry into the World Trade Organization.

The agreement obligates China to cut tariffs an average of 23 percent and promises greater access to the relatively closed Chinese market for U.S. banks, insurers, telecommunications firms and Hollywood film exporters, according to a statement released by the U.S. Embassy.

None of the terms will take effect until China gains entry to the WTO, and most would be phased in over five years or longer.

U.S. Trade Representative Charlene

Barshefsky and China's foreign trade minister, Shi Guangsheng, signed the agreement. They then shook hands and were joined in a champagne toast by President Clinton's special economics adviser, Gene Sperling, and Long Yongtu, China's lead WTO negotiator.

Barshefsky then went to the Communist Party leadership compound and met Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

"Where there's a will, there's a way," Jiang told Barshefsky after the signing.

In Ankara, Turkey, Clinton said the agreement was "a profoundly important step" in relations between Washington and Beijing and a boon for the global economy. China's admission to the WTO has been a major foreign policy and economic goal of the Clinton administration.

World and Nation

Datelines

■ Washington Information obtained from flight recorders

WASHINGTON (AP) — The chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board said Monday he is confident there will be a resolution of the crash of EgyptAir Flight 990 — although he raised the possibility of shifting oversight of the inquiry to another agency.

Jim Hall told a news conference that his confidence was bolstered by information being extracted from the plane's flight data and cockpit voice recorders.

Nonetheless, Hall said the progress of the investigation was being slowed by a painstaking process of translating the cockpit voice information from Arabic, the native language of the pilots, to English.

■ Washington FBI asked to turn over weapons from Waco siege

WASHINGTON (AP) — The special counsel re-investigating the 1993 Branch Davidian siege has asked the FBI to turn over the firearms carried by its on-scene personnel to determine whether federal agents fired shots during the deadly standoff's waning hours.

The FBI has long denied that its agents fired any shots during the seven-week standoff, which ended when the Davidians' compound was destroyed in a fiery inferno.

Cult leader David Koresh and some 80 followers died during the blaze, some from the fire, others from gunshot wounds.

Special counsel John Danforth, appointed in September by Attorney General Janet Reno to investigate the revived controversy, has said the issue of government gunfire will be among the "dark questions" he will seek to answer.

■ Washington Creativity lacking in teacher hiring, study says

WASHINGTON (AP) — States may want to boost teacher quality, but they're going about it the wrong way with regulation-heavy policies that don't encourage creative hiring, asserts a report issued Monday.

The Thomas Fordham Foundation, a private research organization, compiled data on policies it associates with teacher quality and concluded that most states stand in the way of getting quality teachers into the nation's classrooms.

"A far more promising approach is to deregulate entry into teaching, devolve personnel authority to individual schools and then hold those schools and their staffs to account for student learning that occurs in them," said foundation President Chester E. Finn Jr., an Education Department official during the Reagan administration.

The report evaluated states in areas including how they punish or reward teachers and administrators for student achievement, conduct checks on teachers' backgrounds and college course work, and how much they give individual schools power to hire and fire teachers.

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