

At least 366 missing after landslides

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SANTA TECLA, El Salvador — With the ground settling and time passing, rescuers said Monday that the chance of finding survivors from an earthquake that killed more than 400 people is slipping — though one man was freed after using his cell phone to call for help.

Hundreds of people remained buried beneath a mountain of rock and earth in the Las Colinas neighborhood here, some three miles west of the capital.

Residents complained that the government allowed land owners over the years to clear trees from the hillside, alleging that the lack of ground cover could leave those below vulnerable to landslides.

Saturday's magnitude-7.6 quake loosened the hillside, burying the middle-class neighborhood at its base and bringing down some of the mansions above.

Although the largest number of deaths appeared to be in Las Colinas, the quake caused landslides across El Salvador, burying workers and blocking roads. Numbers from official sources varied wildly.

The national emergency committee said at least 403 people were confirmed dead. But the emergency committee for the Santa Tecla region said 436 were dead here alone. The local committee said 366 remained missing — hundreds less than the figure given Saturday by the Red Cross.

Six other people were killed in neighboring Guatemala, and three more were feared dead.

With nearly 5,000 houses destroyed and tens of thousands more damaged in El Salvador, many people were living with relatives or in shelters.

Others who still had homes lacked basic services. Water service was cut to as many as half of the country's 6 million people, the Pan-American Health Organization said.

The World Food Program began distributing food to 13,000 people and had enough to last two weeks. Officials planned to seek more donations.

Aftershocks continued to rock the country on Monday, frightening residents and knocking more debris onto highways. Many towns were reachable only by helicopter, and little was known about damage or deaths in isolated communities.

In Las Colinas, the city, environmentalists and residents had sued landowners and construction companies to stop the deforestation of the hillside. A judge had ruled against them, and angry residents on Monday argued that the resulting development had caused hundreds of deaths.

"What good does money do us if we are subjecting our children to something like this?" asked Santa Tecla Mayor Oscar Ortiz.

After two days of rescue efforts, officials pulled Sergio Moreno from beneath a pile of cinder blocks and earth late Sunday, raising hopes that more may be found alive. But kidney and heart failure left Moreno fighting for his life on Monday.

While buried, Moreno had used his cell phone to call for help. After 31 hours waiting to be freed, he began to lose faith. At one point, anguished, he told rescuers: "You stayed here to watch me die."

Army Maj. Jose Miranda said there was little chance more survivors would be found, adding that the majority of those under the rubble who weren't killed instantly had already likely suffocated.

Ashcroft faces conflicts

■ Other nominees also are questioned for their views on subjects dealing with their offices.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — With 10 of President-elect Bush's 16 Cabinet nominees facing senators this week, Attorney General-designate John Ashcroft spoke out Monday against the practice of racial profiling by police on the eve of his confirmation hearing which is expected to focus sharply on his civil rights record.

"I certainly would like to find a way to be absent that kind of practice," Ashcroft said.

"It's wrong, inappropriate. It shouldn't be done." He said Bush "is sensitive to this problem."

Ashcroft and Gale Norton, as Interior secretary, are meeting opposition not seen since the 1991 Clarence Thomas hearings during the administration of Bush's father.

Ashcroft, mostly silent while liberal groups have assailed his record, confronted one controversial issue — racial profiling — in a conversation with Bush officials in the presence of reporters.

Ashcroft, who appears before the Senate Judiciary Committee starting Tuesday, also faces questions about other hot-button issues: judicial selections for the Supreme Court and other federal court seats; his unyielding anti-abortion stance; his opposition to confirming a black Missouri judge, Ronnie

White, to the federal bench; his comments praising Southern war heroes; and allegations that he improperly used state government employees in his 1984 campaign for governor of Missouri.

The hearings for all nominees will be chaired by Democrats, who control the Senate until Bush is inaugurated on Saturday. The Senate is split 50-50, and after Bush becomes president, Vice President Dick Cheney can break a tie.

Norton, a former Colorado attorney general, faces sharp questions on whether she would weaken environmental protections in her stewardship of public lands. She has advocated more state, local and private involvement in environmental laws. She once suggested that government recognize property owners' "right to pollute" and that they be compensated for losses when forced to protect the environment.

When she appears Thursday before the Energy and Natural Resources committee, Norton also may be questioned about the \$270-per-hour fee for legal work on behalf of the Alaska Legislature, challenging the Interior Department's fishing regulations.

Others facing hearings this week include Colin L. Powell, the selection for secretary of state; Paul O'Neill, Treasury; Tommy Thompson, Health and Human Services; Spencer Abraham, Energy; Christie Whitman, Environmental Protection Agency; Ann Veneman, Agriculture; Mel Martinez, Housing and Urban Development and

Anthony Principi, Veterans Affairs.

Powell faces wide-ranging foreign policy questions, Thompson will be asked about the future of Medicare and Social Security, O'Neill about the nation's recent economic troubles and Abraham about his past support for abolishing the department he would lead if confirmed.

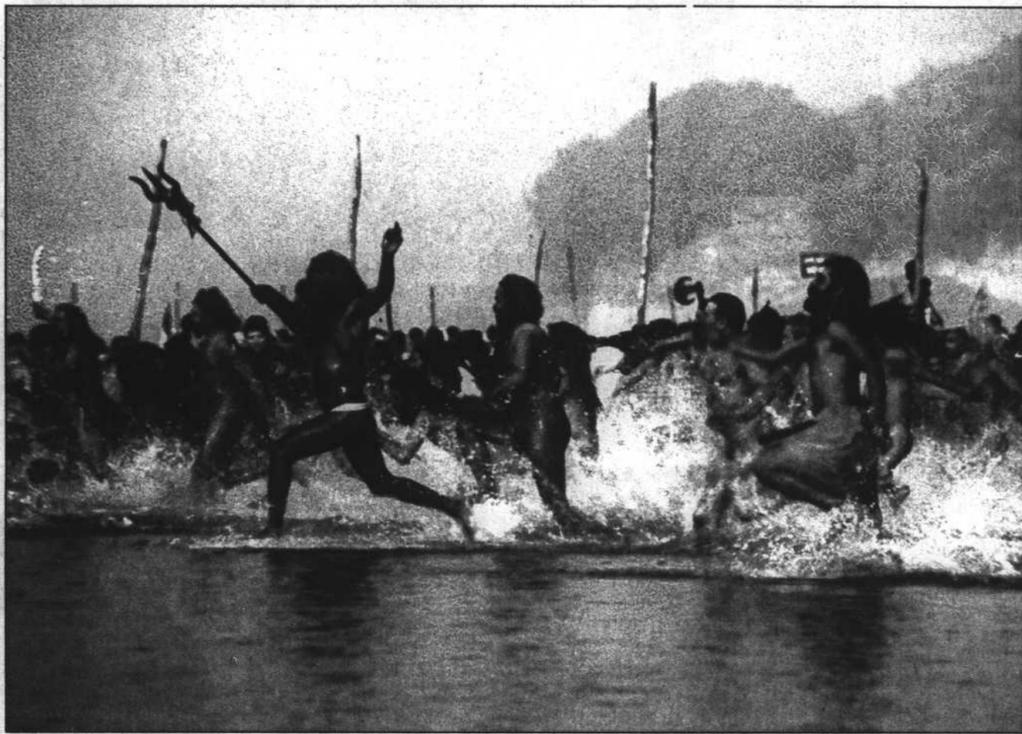
Whitman almost certainly will be questioned about racial profiling, an issue in New Jersey where she has been governor.

Lobbying groups have been pouring through Ashcroft's record as Missouri attorney general, governor and a term as U.S. senator. Ashcroft lost his Senate re-election bid to the late Missouri Gov. Mel Carnahan, who received the majority of votes despite his death in a plane crash. His widow, Jean Carnahan, was appointed to the seat and agreed to introduce Ashcroft to the Judiciary Committee.

Democrats are scrutinizing allegations that Ashcroft improperly used government employees in 1984 when he was attorney general and running for governor. Bush spokeswoman Mindy Tucker, quoting Ashcroft, said any political work was not done on government time.

Opponents pointed to an Aug. 26, 1982 fund-raising letter from Ashcroft on his official attorney general stationery.

Ashcroft also was deposed in a civil lawsuit in which he declined to answer questions on his fund-raising activities while state attorney general.



Amit Bhargava/Newsweek

Nagas, the most important in the hierarchy of Hindu holy men, rush to plunge into the water Sunday during the Maha Kumbh Mela gathering in Allahabad, India. Over 70 million people are expected to bathe at the Kumbh Mela over a period of six weeks.

Reagan rebounds after hip surgery

■ ★□■*, difficult struggle to recovery backed by support from family and friends.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Two days after surgery to repair his broken hip, former President Ronald Reagan sat up in a chair Monday and indulged in a dish of ice cream in what his doctors called a remarkable rebound from a major operation.

"President Reagan remains in stable condition and has impressed doctors with his progress in the last 24 hours," Reagan chief of staff Joanne Drake said in her daily report from St. John's Health Center.

Reagan, who is 89 and has Alzheimer's disease, fell Friday at his Bel-Air home. A pin, plate and screws were used to repair the joint in a 65-minute operation Saturday at St. John's Health Center.

"He sat up in a chair on Sunday afternoon, has already done so this morning and will be encouraged to do so again this afternoon," Drake said. "His appetite has increased, and he has even enjoyed some ice cream, his favorite dessert."

Former first lady Nancy Reagan has been with Ronald Reagan since the fall "and is actively participating in his physical therapy sessions," Drake said.

"She is encouraged by his progress but has been advised by the doctors to remain cautious in her optimism."

There was no elaboration on that point, but orthopedic surgeon Dr. Kevin Ehrhart said hours after the surgery that Ronald Reagan faces months of difficult physical therapy and a "long, uphill struggle" to recovery.

Drake said Reagan is taking very little pain medication, and his ability to sit in a chair quickly after the surgery was seen as a good sign.

Get-well wishes have poured in from around the world, Drake said, including messages from President Clinton, former Presidents Bush and Ford, President-elect Bush and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.

Reagan's son Michael and daughter Patti Davis visited their father on Saturday, and son Ron was expected within a few days.

Maureen Reagan, the 60-year-old daughter of Reagan and actress Jane Wyman, has been undergoing cancer treatment at the same hospital since Dec. 11. Her husband, Dennis Revell, said she was "hanging in there."

Michael Deaver, a former deputy chief of staff for Ronald Reagan, told ABC on Monday that Maureen Reagan had not yet visited her father.

"Maureen's hoping she can go up and see her father, too," Deaver said.

Two inmates at large after prison escape

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MCALISTER, Okla. — Two inmates, one of whom raped and murdered his 81-year-old neighbor, broke out of a maximum-security prison Monday by removing the toilets in their cells, crawling through an air duct and scaling two fences topped with razor wire.

James Robert Thomas, 25, and Willie Lee Hoffman, 21, were discovered missing from the Oklahoma State Penitentiary about 5 a.m., said Jerry Massie, a spokesman for the Corrections Department. A third inmate also tried to escape but got caught in the wire.

It was the first escape from the high-security area of the prison known as H Unit, which opened in 1991, Massie said.

Thomas was convicted in the 1993 slaying of a woman who had hired him to mow her lawn. He was sentenced to life without parole and 400 years for rape. Hoffman was serving 20 years for kidnapping and other charges.

The inmates apparently removed toilets from the back of their cells, which gave them access to a maintenance crawl space, prison spokeswoman Lee Mann said.

They crawled through an air duct, made their way to the roof, reached the ground and climbed over the fences, she said. There were no signs of blood and no evidence that the fences were cut.

Authorities said the inmates are suspected of stealing a car in the McAlester area for their getaway. "There haven't been any other sightings since they left in that vehicle," Massie said.

Authorities said Thomas escaped from the Oklahoma County Jail in 1994.

Hoffman broke out of the Payne County Jail in 1998 and from a private prison in Cushing in 1997.

World/Nation

The Associated Press

Washington, D.C.

New presidential limousines provide better workability

The Secret Service on Monday rolled out a new presidential limousine — a roomier, boxy-styled vehicle that President Clinton said still carries the city's new license plate with the slogan: "Taxation Without Representation."

"I get to ride around in it for five days," Clinton said at the University of the District of Columbia where he gave a speech marking the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

He noted that the newest in the fleet of presidential limos "is an enormous improvement in terms of the workability of the inner space." He didn't elaborate.

Clinton decided last month to put the new license plates on his official limousines to show his support for full voting rights for the District's lone delegate to Congress. The White House says the plates will remain through the end of Clinton's term on Saturday.

Alabama

New chief justice a believer in following 'God's law'

MONTGOMERY — Pledging to "restore and preserve the moral foundation" of the law, Roy Moore — known around the country as the "Ten Commandments Judge" — was sworn in as Alabama's chief justice Monday.

Moore gained recognition in the mid-1990s when he embarked on a crusade to display the Old Testament laws in his Etowah County courtroom, inspiring Christians to fight for similar displays in other states.

Although his famous plaque wasn't on display Monday, he said it would be unveiled in due time.

"God's law will be publicly acknowledged in our court," Moore promised.

Outgoing Chief Justice Perry Hooper Sr. administered the oath of office to Moore in a chamber of the Supreme Court, which now has an 8-1 GOP majority.

New Jersey

Alcohol test kits introduced to dissuade underage drinking

VOORHEES — After spending a night out with friends, some teen-agers in Voorhees may come home to find Mom and Dad waiting to swab their mouths with cotton to see if they have been drinking.

The township is giving alcohol test kits to parents for free in an effort to dissuade teen-agers from drinking.

The township bought 1,000 of the \$7 kits, which are available at the police station and a high school.

The kit consists of a cotton swab and a device that looks like a thermometer. After the swab is saturated with saliva, it is inserted into the base of the gauge. If alcohol is present, a purple line rises in the gauge, indicating a blood-alcohol level.

Italy

Mad cow disease may affect European fast food chains

ROME — Scientists have found Italy's first suspected case of mad cow disease in a cow at a slaughterhouse that supplies meat to McDonald's restaurants in Italy and elsewhere in Europe.

The slaughterhouse in Lodi, in Italy's northern Lombardy region, belongs to the Cremonini group. Cremonini is the only meat supplier for the American fast food restaurants across Italy, company spokesman Massimiliano Parboni said Monday.

Parboni couldn't immediately say which other countries besides Italy get beef from the company.

Until Saturday, when the case was discovered, Italy had been considered mad-cow free.

The only two cases reported there were two cows in 1994 which had been imported from Britain.

McDonald's, which has 295 restaurants here serving 600,000 customers daily, recently put up signs in eateries across Italy to reassure consumers about the origin of its beef. It stood by its Italian supplier Monday, saying the "quality, traceability and safety" of its beef protect consumers.

Weather

TODAY
Cloudy
high 28, low 17

TOMORROW
Snow showers
high 27, low 18

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