



SOUTH ASIA DISASTER NEWS

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WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Afghanistan



2,262 civilians killed in 2011: Report

Source: [The Frontier Post, Kabul](#)

Date: 26 January 2012

KABUL (NNI): A total of 2,262 Afghan civilians died last year in the Afghan violence, compared to 2,777 in 2010, a report of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) said. The report to the US Congress said that there was a slight fall in death toll from the Afghan conflict in the last year, AFP reported. In the Afghan army, there was a similar decline with 289 deaths last year down from 821 in the previous year, while the toll for the police stood at 522, lower than 1,292 in 2010. However, the CRS has said that the figures should be treated with caution as the estimates are “based on varying time periods and have been created using different methodologies”. According to the report a total of 1,864 US soldiers have been killed and 15,262 wounded since the US invasion that toppled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001. The number of civilians killed in Afghan violence in the first six months of 2011 rose to 1,462 showing a 15-percent increase, according to the UN. An annual report is expected to come out in mid-January. Eighty percent of the deaths are blamed on the insurgents.

National Commission on Disaster Reaches out Avalanche Victims in Badakhshan

Source: [Government of Afghanistan, Kabul](#)

Date: 28 January 2012

As instructed by President Hamid Karzai, the National Commission on Disaster provided relief assistance of 8 million Afs to the victims of the recent avalanches that have hit a number of districts in Badakhshan province. Deeply grieved by the casualties as a result of the natural phenomenon, President Karzai spoke on the phone with Governor of Badakhshan and instructed him to make every possible effort to immediately reach out to the victims in urgent need. According to Dr. Adib, the provincial Governor, the recent avalanches killed 46 people including women and children and wounded 60 others in different districts across the province. He added, the natural disaster killed over 800 livestock and left roads connecting several districts blocked against traffic. On order by the President, Governor Adib visited all the affected districts to distribute relief packages to the people hit by the disasters.

DFID, WFP to support flood-hit people

Source: [The Independent, Staff Reporter](#)

Date: 31 January 2012

The United Kingdom’s department for International Development (DFID) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) will provide support to 1,50,000 people who are affected by the recent floods

and water-logging in Satkhira district in Southwestern Bangladesh, said a WFP press release. The donation of 6,79,000 US dollar will support displaced women, men and children by providing a one-off cash grant of Tk 1,500 to each affected household, designed to cover food needs for one month. The distributions, which will begin in next week, will continue for ten days and are in addition to WFP's ongoing nutrition support in Sathkhira to children under five and pregnant and breastfeeding women, the release added.

Death toll from measles rises to 17

Source: The Frontier Post, Herat (AIP)

Date: 01 February 2012

Death toll from measles outbreak climbed to 17 as five more children died of the viral disease over the past two weeks in western Ghor province, an official said Monday. The disease which broke out in the province nearly two months ago also hit Lafra area of Chaghcharan, capital of Ghor province, killing five children, Abdul Hayee Khatibi, spokesman for Ghor governor, told Afghan Islamic Press (AIP). He said the children died as health organizations and relief teams could not visit the area to vaccinate the children due to closer of roads by heavy snowfall. Khatibi said medicines have been transported to affected area through WHO and UNICEF helicopters to stop the area from spreading. On Dec. 12, Ghor governor reported that at least 12 died of measles in different villages of Chaghcharan district.

Bangladesh



Nipah virus kills 4 Joypurhat kids

Source: The Daily Star, Joypurhat

Date: 26 January 2012

Panic has gripped the residents of different villages in Khetlal and Sadar upazilas of Joypurhat district following death of four children infected with "Nipah virus" in three days from January 20 to January 22. The dead are Anik Mondol, 7, son of Alam Mondol, Marium Begum, 7, daughter of Jahangir Hossain of Natunhaat Sardarpara in Joypurhat town, and Tohidul Islam, 8, son of Anwar Hossain of Dadra Jointigram, and Shakila Begum, 9, daughter of of Ikargara village in Khetlal upazila. Anik died at Bogra Medical College and Hospital on January 20, Shakila at Joypur Sadar Hospital on January 21 and Marium and Tohidul at Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital on January 22. After blood sample test, Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), Dhaka, confirmed that the four children were infected with deadly 'Nipah virus', civil surgeon (CS) office sources said. District CS office quoting the family members of the four said they took date juice and then fell sick. Symptoms were high fever and headache, they added. Besides, two more children were admitted to Joypurhat Modern Hospital with high fever and headache in the last 48 hours until 10:00am yesterday. They are Sabbir Hossain, 3, son of Ujjal Hossain, and Suraiya Ayrin, 5, daughter of Ayub Ali of Natunhaat Sardarpara in Joypurhat town. There are undergoing treatments at an isolated ward at the hospital. The district health department through loudspeakers on Tuesday urged the people not to have date juice that is considered as food of bats, carriers of Nipah virus. Two separate teams of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control Research (IEDCR) on Tuesday visited Joypurhat Modern Hospital and collected blood samples of the two infected children. They also visited the family members of Anik, Mariam, Touhidul and Shakila. Later, they collected stools of bats from some areas of the two upazilas. While visiting Joypurhat municipality and Ikargara village of Khetlal upazila yesterday, local journalists found that the panic-stricken people had sent their children to safer places. Rozi Begum of Sardarpara under Joypurhat municipality said she sent her 10-year-old daughter to Panchbibi upazila. The district health department formed five medical teams for five upazilas of the district a set up monitoring cell, the civil Surgeon Md Mozammel Haque said.

\$63m Japanese support for Child Health Program

Source: The Daily Star, Dhaka

Japan will provide 63 million US dollar (5.04 billion yen) for improvement of maternal, neonatal and child health programme in Bangladesh. To this effect, an exchange of notes was signed yesterday by Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Shiro Sadoshima and Senior Secretary at the Economic Relations Division Iqbal Mahmood. The loan agreement of the project was also signed between the senior secretary and Chief Representative of JICA Bangladesh Office Dr Takao Toda. A Japanese ODA loan will be utilized for the “Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Improvement Project-Phase I under the Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Development Programme (HPNSDP),” said a press release of the embassy of Japan.

Nipah virus claims one more life in Joypurhat

Source: The Daily Star, Joypurhat

Date: 27 January 2012

Nipah virus claimed one more life in Joypurhat yesterday, raising the death toll to five in the district. The dead was identified as Md Ferdous Alam, 38, son of Yunus Ali of Gulshanmore area in Joypurhat municipality. Dr Mozammel Haque, civil surgeon of Joypurhat, confirmed the death. Four children infected with the deadly virus died in Joypurhat Sadar and Khetlal upazilas in three days from January 20 to 23. Doctors at Joypurhat Modern Hospital quoted Ferdous' family members as saying that he fell sick after taking date juice. Besides, six more children with high fever and headache were admitted to Joypurhat Modern Hospital in 24 hours until 2:00pm yesterday.

60 houses gutted in Chittagong

Source: The Daily Star, Staff Correspondent

Date: 28 January 2012

At least 63 establishments, including 60 thatched houses, were gutted in a fire at Jahed Colony in South Kattoli of the port city yesterday. Other establishments are one garage with 14 rickshaws, a grocery shop and a poultry farm. The fire originated from a lit mosquito coil in a house around 2:30pm and soon engulfed to the adjacent establishment, said sources.

On information, two Bandor Fire Station units rushed in and doused the fire after two hours of efforts. The valuables worth Tk 10 lakh were gutted in the fire, said Agrabad Fire Station officials.

Chittagong fire guts 110 shanties

Source: The Daily Star, BSS, Chittagong

Date: 30 January 2012

At least 110 shanties and six shops were gutted in a fire in city's Agrabad area on Saturday (28/01/2011). Fire service sources said the fire originated from a mosquito coil in a slum house near Maa O Shishu Hospital at around 2:30am and quickly engulfed the surrounding shanties. Six small shops were also burnt into ashes in the fire. Firemen from Agrabad and Bandar units extinguished the fire at around 3:30am.

Bhutan



No disaster news found this week



Mild tremors in three districts of Andhra Pradesh

Source: The Hindu
Date: 27 January 2012

Mild tremors rocked parts of Khammam, Krishna and Guntur districts on Thursday afternoon causing panic among the people, who ran out of their homes. The tremors lasted five seconds in several villages in Chintakani, Madhira, Yerrupalem and Bonakal mandals of Khammam district. A few houses reportedly developed minor cracks at Patharlapadu village in Chintakani mandal. Revenue Divisional Officer V. Venkateswarlu said instructions were issued to MROs to stay put in their respective headquarters. In Guntur district, people ran out of their homes in Amaravathi, Atchampet and Krosur mandals. Some houses reportedly developed cracks. There was however no loss of life or damage to property. The tremors were experienced in seven mandals of Krishna district. Police and fire personnel were put on high alert for the next 12 hours. According to R.K. Chadha, seismologist at CSIR-NGRI here, the epicentre of the tremor (2.8 magnitude on Richter scale) was near Madhira in Khammam district.

Bird flu re-surfaces in Tripura

Source: The Hindu
Date: 27 January 2012

Bird flu has re-surfaced at Lembucherra, 45 km from here, official sources said on Thursday. More than 2,000 ducks and others birds will be culled on Friday. Following reports of poultry deaths in the area, blood samples were collected and examined and H5 strain of avian influenza virus was found, officials said. Meanwhile, the State government has formed 16 rapid response teams to cull ducks and other birds in the area. Sources said the Border Security Force was alerted so that no poultry bird could enter the Indian territory. Tripura has a 856-km border with Bangladesh.

Chennai : Books destroyed in heritage building fire

Source: The Hindu
Date: 27 January 2012



A minor fire broke out in a book store destroying books on Anna Salai in Chennai on Thursday.

A fire broke out in a publishing house on the first floor of Agurchand Mansion, a heritage building on Anna Salai, on Thursday. There was no damage to the building, located at the busy Spencers junction, but several hundred books were destroyed. Fire and Rescue Services sources said the fire in the office-cum-godown of S.Chand & Company was reported around 9.40 a.m. No one was at the publishing house as it was closed for Republic Day. It was traders in other establishments on the building who noticed the smoke

and alerted the fire services. Eight fire tenders from Triplicane, Teynampet, Kilpauk, Mylapore and Raj Bhavan stations and over 20 firemen were rushed to the spot. The firemen battled the blaze for over four hours and put out the fire. Stacks of books caught fire and the flames spread to the false ceiling destroying it completely. Computers, telephones and other electronic equipment were also damaged. "An electrical short circuit is suspected to be the cause of the fire. Our teams reached the spot within minutes and managed to contain the fire and put it out completely within hours. More than 50 per cent of the books kept inside was saved," S. Veeramani, Divisional Officer, Chennai City South, TNFRS. Anna Salai police have registered a case. This is the second fire in a heritage building this month – the previous on January 16 ravaged the Kalas Mahal in the Chepauk Palace, which housed several government offices. Both the fire incidents happened on a holiday. Once known as Mount Road's first 100-foot-tall building, Agurchand Mansion was one of the earliest establishments used for commercial purposes. This early 20th-century structure is an example of the Indo-Saracenic architectural style and was originally known as the Khaleeli Mansion. "The Khaleelis were a merchant family with Persian roots," said historian, V.Sriram, adding the ownership changed hands over the years. The building figures in the list of heritage buildings compiled by the Justice E.Padmanabhan Committee, he added. S. Chand & Company's Chennai branch has been functioning from Agurchand Mansion since 1964, said a staff member of the publishing firm.

Quake jolts Haryana

Source: The Hindu

Date: 30 January 2012

A 3.5-magnitude earthquake jolted Haryana's Rohtak and Sonapat districts on Sunday. But there was no loss of life or damage to property.

Two killed, 12 injured in Nagpur building collapse

Source: newsonair

Date: 31 January 2012

Two persons were killed and twelve injured as a private six-storey building of cold-storage-cum-godown in the outskirts of Nagpur city collapsed last evening. Two bodies were extricated from the debris and several other injured people were taken out till late last night and the injured were rushed to the Indira Gandhi Medical College and Hospital for further treatment. The one and half year old building was still under construction in parts and use of the sub-standard building material could be one of the main reasons for the mishap.

25 people injured in Odisha bus mishap

Source: newsonair

Date: 31 January 2012

In Odisha, at least 25 people were injured, 10 of them seriously, when a bus belonging to a sponge iron company met with an accident, last night, near Kunmun chowk, about 45 km from Rourkela. The employees of the company were returning to their homes, when it hit a road side tree causing injuries to almost all employees travelling in the bus. The injured were rushed to Rajgangpur hospital.

New climate change models for Maldives predict rising sea temperatures

Source: Minivan News

Date: 29 January 2012



The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) has completed a nine-month research into developing a model interpreting the future climatic change scenarios for the Maldives that can provide projections which can be referred during national and local development planning. RIMES, based in Bangkok, provides regional early warning services and capacity building to its member states in Africa and Asia – including Maldives- in the end-to-end early warning of tsunami and hydro-meteorological hazards.

Speaking at a press conference on Thursday, Dr Govindarajalu Srinivasan, technical adviser-climate applications and research, who headed the research in Maldives, explained that “we tried to interpret the scenarios of future climate change for the Maldivian context”. He noted that the existing global climate change models (GCMs) which are the most important tools to study climate change and make projections, do not provide descriptions for regional or local scale. Therefore, he revealed that the GCMs were statistically downscaled, and prior reports addressing climate change concerns for Maldives were examined to “generate a high resolution climate change scenario for Maldives”. Analysis was also done to look at the extreme climate change risks for the Maldives, Dr Srinivasan added. He also observed that 13 participants from the Maldives Meteorological Services (MMS) and the Environment Ministry were trained in the last leg of the project to analyse extreme climate events linked to temperature and rainfall changes. State Minister for Housing and Environment Dr Mohamed Shareef added that the findings of the program and trainees’ recommendations will be used in the ministry’s decision making process. Although the details on the findings of the research were not revealed to the press, Dr. Shareef added that the ministry has received an initial draft and a final report will be submitted by the RIMES soon, which will be publicized at a later date. In a press statement issued on Thursday the ministry pointed out that the present findings also suggest that the sea level, sea surface temperature, rainfall and its variations pose future climate risks for Maldives. “Future climate change scenarios inherently represent a set of likely climate futures. Sea Surface Temperature parameter inferred directly from GCMs show a steady increase in temperatures up to 2080, the statement reads. However, the ministry noted that more focused research is recommended to understand the projected sea level changes and better observational network are required to characterize the unique climatologically settings of the Maldives. The project commissioned to RIMES is a component “Integrating Climate Change Risks into Resilient Island Planning in the Maldives”, 2010-2014 – a government initiative which seeks to ensure that climate change risks are integrated into resilient island planning and that governments and communities are able to prioritize and implement climate change adaptation. UNDP, a large contributor to the project, says that the most serious underlying driver of increasing vulnerability to climate change in the Maldives is the “absence of systematic adaptation planning and practice”. “Climate change risks and long-term resilience are not adequately integrated into island land use planning or into coastal development and protection policies and practice, and past autonomous risk reduction efforts have sometimes had mal-adaptive effects” an entry on the UNDP

website reads.UNDP also highlights that small, low-lying atoll islands of Maldives are highly vulnerable to flooding and coastal erosion: “More than 44 percent of settlements, including 42 percent of the population, and more than 70 percent of all critical infrastructures are located within 100 meters of shoreline. Intensive rainfall, storm surges and swell waves are expected to be aggravated through sea level rise and climate change effects on weather patterns. This will compound underlying trends of increasing coastal erosion and pressure on scarce land resources, and increase physical vulnerability of island populations, infrastructure and livelihood assets.”

Nepal

India donates ambulances, buses

Source: Kantipur News, Kathmandu

Date: 26 January 2012



KATHMANDU, JAN 26 - Marking the 63rd Republic Day, India on Thursday donated 20 ambulances and four buses to different organisations and schools in twenty districts.

The vehicles were handed over to the representatives of the recipient organisations and educational institutions at a function organised on the premises of the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu, according to a statement issued by the Indian Embassy.

Prior to the handover function, Indian Ambassador Jayant Prasad delivered the Republic Day message to a gathering. Speaking on the occasion, Prasad shed light on various aspects of the Nepal-India relations.

The ambassador handed over keys of the vehicles to representatives of the recipient organisations, including Dhading District Hospital and Nepal Red Cross Society. Four ambulances were gifted by Ashutosh Agrawal, the consul general of India in Birgunj, said the release.

Prasad also handed over more than 200 pushcarts as gifts to various municipalities through the Ministry of Local Development for waste management.

In the afternoon, Ambassador Prasad hosted a reception to mark the Day. Leaders from various political parties, former prime ministers, incumbent ministers, senior bureaucrats, chiefs of security agencies, diplomats, journalists and industrialists were present at the reception.

Two killed, over dozen injured in mini truck accident

Source: Nepal News, Madampur

Date: 28 January 2012

Two persons were killed and over dozen injured in a mini-truck accident in Madanpur of Nuwakot district along Pasang Lhamu highway Saturday morning.The mini-truck (Ba 2 Kha 39) en route to Okharpauwa from Belkot skidded off the road and fell some 30 meters below, police said.The deceased have been identified as Thuli Tamang, 55 of Chatura VDC-7, and Yuvaraj Lama, 5, of Madanpur DVC-7 of Nuwakot. They died while undergoing treatment at Bir hospital in Kathmandu. All injured are receiving treatment at Bir hospital.

Govt's disaster response draws criticism

Source: The Himalayan Times, Kathmandu

Date: 31 January 2012

KATHMANDU: At a time when the government's slow response to the recent earthquake is fresh in public memory, a group of lawmakers today sought immediate drafting and passage of Disaster Management Act to make future rescue operations more effective. Participating at the programme — 'Impact of Recent Earthquake and Necessity of Disaster Management Act' — lawmakers prepared a memorandum to submit to the prime minister demanding steps to improve disaster management in the country. Stating that rescue and relief programmes for the September 18 quake victims were inadequate, the memo sought immediate implementation of Disaster Management Act. "Had there been an Act related to disaster management, rescue, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in quake-hit areas would have gained momentum," said the memo. Describing the situation of quake victims as deplorable even five months after the incident, the memorandum demanded that the government provide loan without interest for a minimum of five years to the victims. Similarly, the memorandum also demanded speedy reconstruction of 1,002 school buildings, 76 health posts, and 267 government offices destroyed in the quake.

At the programme, Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, Subas Chandra Nembang, admitted that the government was lagging behind in rescue efforts and it had also failed to develop pre-disaster strategy. "The government had promised to bring the Disaster Management Act, but a bill in this regard has not reached the House for discussion," Nembang added.

Hospital waste posing health hazard

Source: The Himalayan Times, Kathmandu
Date: 31 January 2012

KATMANDU: Hazardous and infectious waste produced by hospitals is still being mixed with municipal waste, causing serious threat to human health. According to the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), around 4,300 metric tonnes of waste is produced annually by hospitals, clinics, health centres and health posts. About 20 per cent of it is infectious and very harmful. However, they are still mixed with municipal waste, said Sailendra Upreti, joint secretary at MoHP. "Five to 30 per cent of infection among patients is related to waste," he said. Inesh Dhakal of Health Care Foundation Nepal informed that a survey carried out in six hospitals showed that the waste produced by hospitals was dumped haphazardly on the streets. "This has resulted in ground water contamination and river pollution. Even human organs, infected syringes and aborted foetus are mixed with general waste," he said. "The thrown syringes, which are collected and sold by garbage collectors, are being reused by some hospitals transmitting Hepatitis and HIV among people." Ganesh Dahal, representative of Nepal Bar Association, said the existing laws related to waste management were not effectively implemented. "The government neither monitors the situation nor punishes culprits," he said. "We have not heard a single action taken against them." Dr Sumitra Amatya, executive director at Solid Waste Management Technical Support Centre, said some hospitals have managed their waste well, but others are violating the law. "The Waste Management Act 2011 has clear provisions for segregation of waste, and makes hospitals and industries responsible for management of their hazardous waste and there are provisions of legal action, including cutting of state facilities and up to three months jail sentence," Amatya said. Speakers at the programme — Health Care Waste Management in Nepal — jointly organised today by the Ministry of Local Development, Nepal Medical Association and UNDP said hospitals, municipals, government and people were responsible.



11 miners feared dead in Tarnawi
Source: Daily Times, Abbottabad
Date: 26 January 2012

ABBOTTABAD: At least 11 miners are feared dead after a landslide trapped them in a phosphate mine near the city of Qalandarabad on Wednesday. The incident took place when miners were having lunch inside the mine in the mountainous Tarnawi area, some 45 kilometres from Abbottabad. The nine miners



have been named Naseer Shah, Waheed Shah, Abdul Razaq, Tariq, Abbas Shah, Riaz, Zakir, Haneef and Javaid Syed Imtiaz Hussain, a government official from Abbottabad, said the landslide was huge and that it would take a miracle to save the trapped miners. Hussain said continuous rain is hampering rescue efforts. Local police said the trapped miners are poor labourers and that local residents were digging with shovels to help rescue them. No miners have been rescued so far.

Four children among seven killed in gas blast

Source: Dawn News, Peshawar

Date: 26 January 2012

PESHAWAR, Jan 25: Seven people, including four children, were killed and two injured as a gas explosion damaged two houses in Shah Qabool Street of Peshawar city Wednesday morning. According to police, Nazar Mohammad's family left the burner on the stove in a room turned on due to chilly weather before going to sleep. Gas supply was suspended at night and its restoration later on filled the room with gas. And when a woman lit a match, the room exploded damaging the two houses and killing Nazar Mohammad, 45, his wife, 35, four children Attiya Umar, 12, Aiman Umar, 9, Waqar Umar, 8, and Asma Umar, 13, and another woman Maryam, 23. Irshad Rehman Umar, 29, and Samin Umar, 25, suffered critical burns. Rescue 1122 personnel pulled the bodies out of debris and shifted the injured to Lady Reading Hospital, where they were admitted to the neurology ward. However, they were stated to be in critical condition.

Fire engulfs cardboard godown, factory in Lahore

Source: The News, Lahore

Date: 27 January 2012

LAHORE: Fire engulfed a godown and a factory in Kasur Pura Ravi Road area of Lahore gutting machinery worth millions of rupees, cardboards and various other goods, Geo News reported on late Thursday night. According to the report, fire fighters managed to extinguish fire after struggle of four hours. Fire brigade official said that the fire broke out in a factory and godown due to short-circuit. Ten vans of fire brigade took part in the operation. Residents of the area rushed outside of their homes.

Woman buried alive as roof caves in

Source: Dawn News, Sukkur

Date: 27 January 2012

SUKKUR: A woman was buried alive and her husband and two children were injured when roof of her house collapsed on them in the Chandro Ram Colony in Ghotki on Thursday. Ms Rajni Kumari died under the debris and her husband Ajeet Kumar and two children Saajna and Baby Anita were injured. They were pulled out of the debris by neighbours and taken to a Rahimyarkhan hospital.

Two kids killed as shanties catch fire

Source: Dawn News, Lahore

Date: 28 January 2012

LAHORE: Two minor children died and some others suffered burns when a fire broke out in shanties near the Expo Centre in Johar Town on Friday. The fire broke out in a shanty on Friday night and spread to

four other shanties. Resultantly, children asleep in two of the shanties suffered multiple burns. Shaukat Ali's daughter Amina (7) and son Shabbir (10) died at the scene, Rescue 1122 officials said. The fire spread so quickly that it gave no time to the families to rescue their children, they said. The fire was controlled after two hours and its cause has yet to be determined. The injured children have been shifted to the hospital. shot dead: A youth was allegedly shot dead by some drug peddlers in Gawalmandi on Friday, according to the police. Usman Butt, of Rehman Street, had exchanged words with Amir, an alleged drug peddler, which resulted in Butt's death. The police registered a case against the killers with no arrest.

Two drown as boat capsizes in reservoir

Source: Dawn News, Karak

Date: 28 January 2012

KARAK: Two teenagers drowned when a boat capsized in Lawagher dam here on Friday. Police sources said that 14 people, including women and children, of the same family of Mamani Lawagher village were bringing firewood and other daily-use items in a boat through Lawagher dam. They said that the boat capsized and two persons drowned while 12 others were rescued by local divers. The two were identified as Naseebullah (13), son of Ashraf Khan, and an unnamed girl (14), daughter of Amanullah. Sources said that the local police were trying to arrange divers from other parts of the district to fish out bodies from the dam, but till filing of this report no such arrangements could be made. They said that the district administration had called divers from other neighboring districts to retrieve the bodies from the dam as soon as possible. The Mamani Lawagher village has turned into a virtual island, as the residents had no land link to the other side of the same village and they have to use boats for bringing daily-use commodities.

Danger of floods from glacial lakes highlighted

Source: Dawn News, Peshawar

Date: 29 January 2012

PESHAWAR: Natural scientists and environmentalists here on Saturday said that communities' involvement could mitigate the negative effects of glacial lake outburst floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's higher regions, preventing loss of lives and properties. They said that the human and technical capacity building of the provincial public sector institutions dealing with climate change would enable them to understand and take measures for the prevention of disasters because of glacial lake outburst floods, a natural phenomenon. "Warming trend in our region is greater than the global average, which is increasingly becoming obvious since 2009," Wajid Ali Khan, the provincial minister for environment, said while addressing the participants of an orientation workshop of a newly-launched project. The project "Reducing Risks and Vulnerabilities from Glacier Lake Outburst Floods in Northern Pakistan", funded by the UNDP, has been launched to minimise risks of natural disaster as a result of floods caused by a glacial lake outburst. The minister said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had made it as its top priority to protect people's lives from natural disasters by taking appropriate measures. "Few avalanches, massive landslides, floods, and cloudbursts during the last one decade wreaked havoc in Pakistan and now the glacial lakes have been posing an imminent threat of floods," said the minister.

Two more fall prey to toxic liquor

Source: Daily Times, Karachi

Date: 31 January 2012

KARACHI: At least two people died and six others were shifted to the hospital after consuming toxic liquor in the precincts of Korangi Industrial Area police station on Monday. SHO Malik Ayub said some eight members of a family consumed toxic liquor in a gathering held at Street No 1 of Korangi D-Area. The affectees, including Babar Maseeh, son of Mushtaq Maseeh; Waqas alias Mota, son of Qayyum Maseeh; Azeem, Imran, Dilawar, Waseem Maseeh, Lawrence Maseeh and an unknown were brought to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre. Babar and Waqas died while being treated at the hospital while other affectees were said to be in critical condition. All victims were inhabitants of Qayyumabad and

purchased the lethal liquor from Zaman Town. It is pertinent to mention here that toxic liquor has so far claimed 45 lives and continues to be sold at Chenesar Goth, Azam Basti, Essa Nagri, Sohrab Goth, Zaman Town and other areas. However, these incidents are still unnoticed by the government, creating fear or more losses in the future.

8 killed as van falls into ravine in Upper Dir

Source: The News, Dir
Date: 01 February 2012

DIR: Eight passengers were killed and twelve others sustained injuries when a van plunged into a ravine in Sher Bangal area of Upper Dir on Wednesday, Geo News reported. According to police sources, a passenger van fell off the road into a ravine that killed eight passengers and injured 12 others. Some injured are in critical condition, sources told.

Clashes in Northwest Pakistan Kill 50

Source: Relief Web, Karachi
Date: 01 February 2012

Pakistani officials say at least 50 people have been killed in fighting between the military and Taliban in the country's northwest. Officials said Tuesday's clashes erupted when dozens of militants attacked a security post in the Kurram tribal region, near the Afghan border. The military responded by sending in helicopter gunships to the Jogi area for support. At least 10 Pakistani soldiers and 40 militants were killed. The fighting broke out a week after six Pakistani troops were killed while trying to take control of Jogi. Tuesday's death toll could not be independently confirmed because the area is largely closed to journalists. It is an area considered to be sympathetic to the Pakistani Taliban's leader Hakimullah Mehsud. The Pakistani military first launched operations against Islamist militants in Kurram last July, and the fighting has yet to die down. It follows a series of similar military operations in the country's mountainous northwest aimed at stopping the Pakistani Taliban, known as the Tehrik-i-Taliban (TTP). The TTP is responsible for numerous attacks targeting civilians, foreigners and government targets that have killed thousands during the past few years. The group says it wants to take down the Pakistani government, in part, because of its partnership with the United States in the war on terror. Meanwhile, at least 10 people, including family members of a politician, have been killed by gunfire in Karachi, Pakistan. Police say the wife and daughter of Baluchistan lawmaker Sahibzada Bakhtiar Khan Domki were killed as they were being driven through the neighborhood of Clifton. Their driver was also killed in the attack. Police say they are trying to determine the method used by the killer or killers. In a separate incident, three men were shot dead in another part of Karachi.

Sri Lanka

Japan aid to benefit over 370 families in Kilinochchi District

Source: The Island, Colombo
Date: 26 January 2012



Japanese ambassador Nobuhito Hobo speaking at the signing of a grant aid to the conflict affected villages in Kandavalai Divisional Secretary's Division in Killinochchi on Monday said that Japan had provided Sri Lanka assistance to the tune of Rs 1525 billion since 1965. The latest grant aid amounting to US \$ 223,075 (approximately Rs25 million) provided under its Grassroots Human Security Projects Scheme (GGP) was expected to improve the living environment and livelihood of recent returnees in a conflict affected village in terms of

ensuring human security. Since 1989 Japan has funded 226 such projects here at a total cost of about 29.5 million Dollars. At a brief media briefing that followed the signing, Ambassador Hobo said this year was the 60th Anniversary of Japan-Sri Lanka Diplomatic relations. During the last six decades both countries maintained strong mutual partnerships. Japan had been a strong partner in Sri Lanka's socio and economic development. This mutual support would continue and be further strengthened. Grant aid was signed between ambassador Hobo, and Chairman, Sewalanka, Dr. Harsha Kumara Navarathna. It will benefit more than 370 families directly

Dr. Harsha Navarathna said "the project will renovate small scale economic related infrastructure, which would include the construction of the fishery and community hall with water and sanitation facilities to benefit the fishing community and renovation of three kilometers of an inner road leading to the seas well as renovation of two causeways and a culvert. In order to enable farmers to engage in paddy cultivation during the yala season, the project will also lend support to construct a water diversion bund"

Four mourners dead as van erupts in flames

Source: Daily News, Kalutara

Date: 27 January 2012

Four members of the same family were burnt to death and seven others were admitted to Nagoda hospital with burn injuries when a small van carrying a group of mourners who had attended a funeral at Magalkanda, Maggona caught fire at Diyagama on the Kalutara-Horana Road shortly after midnight on Wednesday.



People gather to see the burnt van Picture by Ingiriya Central Group Corr

The deceased included the 56 year old father who drove the van, his 32 year old wife and their two children aged six and seven years. Eleven people who are all relatives had travelled in the van. An eyewitness, W. Susantha Vipula Kumara said he rushed to the scene after hearing the sound of an explosion on the road about 20 minutes after midnight on Wednesday and saw a van on fire. Soon several others rushed to the scene and attempts made by them to douse the fire proved futile. Kalutara Chief Magistrate Aruna Aluthge visited the spot yesterday morning and held the inquiry into the deaths. Police investigating the incident were trying to ascertain the cause for the fire.

Drought in Sri Lanka's wet zone affects tea production

Source: Colombo Page, Colombo

Date: 27 January 2012

Jan 27, Colombo: Sri Lanka tea industry sources say that the prevailing severe drought has affected the tea cultivation and production. Tea cultivating districts of Ratnapura, Kalutara and Galle in the wet zone have not received any rain for several weeks. Less humidity and extreme cold in the night had also adversely impacted the tea cultivation, industry sources say. Tea harvest has declined and some factories have slashed the overtime work of the factory employees. Tea small holders say prevalence of the drought for few more weeks will cause extreme damage to their cultivation.

Sri Lanka donates US\$ 50,000 to the Philippines for flood victims

Source: Colombo Page, Colombo

Date: 30 January 2012

Jan 28, Colombo: As a gesture of goodwill Sri Lanka has donated US\$ 50,000 to the Philippine Government to assist that country's disaster relief operations following the disastrous flooding caused by

the Typhoon Washi last month. Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the Philippines Nawalage Bennet Cooray handed over the donation of US\$ 50,000 to the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Albert F. Del Rosario at a simple ceremony held at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila January 25, 2012. President Mahinda Rajapaksa has instructed the government officials to urgently transfer the funds for the recovery effort, Sri Lanka Embassy in Manila said in a statement. "Having witnessed the vast destruction caused to human lives and properties by the recent floods in the Cagayan de Oro and Iligan Cities in Mindanao Province of the Philippines, President Mahinda Rajapaksa immediately conveyed his condolences to his counterpart, President Benigno S. Aquino III and the government and people of that county on 21st December, 2011," the statement said. According to the Philippine government, the death toll from the disaster stands at 1,080 and some 338,000 people have been affected and more than 10,000 homes damaged.

17 fatal mishaps within 24 hrs on Saturday & Sunday, Roads turn bloody: 156 killed during past 29 days

Source: The Island, Colombo
Date: 30 January 2012

In a grim and macabre turn of events, 17 persons have been killed in 15 road accidents within the 24-hour period from 6.00 am on Saturday to 6.00 am on Sunday, bringing the total number of fatalities to 156 for the mere first 29 days of 2012. The tragedies which occurred countrywide had been in the police divisions of Ruwanwella, Ragama, Wattala, Mirigama, Negombo, Kochchikade, Eppawela, Kuliyaipitiya, Kurunegala, Akuressa, Matara, Ahungalla, Mahiyangana and Payagala, Police Spokesman SP Ajit Rohana told The Island yesterday. The most number of fatalities occurred in the Gampaha District at Ragama, Wattala, Negombo, Mirigama and Kochchikade. Among the reasons for these fatalities have been excess speed, drunk driving, fatigue and jaywalking. The tragedy at Ruwanwella snuffed out the life of a 68-year-old person when a lorry collided with his motor cycle, while at Ragama a motor car ran off the road, killing a 62-year-old woman. The third incident in Gampaha District was at Wattala where a 62-year-old pedestrian was hit by a trishaw. The other mishaps included two incidents at Mirigama where a van knocked down a person at a pedestrian crossing while another van ran over a 41-year-old pedestrian. The other incident took place at Kochchikade, where a lorry hit a pedestrian. The Eppawela incident claimed the life of two teenagers aged 16 and 17 when their motor cycles crashed head on into each other's. In Kuliyaipitiya tragedy, a 19-year old pedestrian as well. In Kurunegala, a 63-year-old person was killed when his motorcycle skidded off the road. In Akuressa a van knocked down a 79-year-old woman. In Matara, a 70-year-old woman was killed when a bus ran over her. At Ahungalla, a 27-year-old youth died when a lorry collided with his motorcycle. At Payagala in the Kalutara District, a car crashed into a bicycle and a motor cycle, killing the cyclist and injuring the motor cyclist.

Fire at Matugama PS building

Source: Lanka Mirror, Matugama
Date: 30 January 2012

A fire has caused damaged to the two-storey building that houses the Matugama Pradeshiya Sabha. According to police, the office of the PS chairman has been damaged in the blaze that occurred last night (Jan. 29). Firefighters from Kalutara urban council and police put out the fire. PS chairman L.G. Liyanarachchi said several documents have been burnt, but that there were no casualties

Workshop on Greenhouse Gas Inventory for the Asian Region held in Sri Lanka

Source: Colombo Page, Colombo
Date: 31 January 2012

Colombo: The United Nations sponsored training workshop on climate change for the representatives of Asia region commenced today in Colombo and it will be held until February 03. The Consultative Group of Experts (CGE) Hands-on Training Workshop on Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory for the Asian Region organized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is being

held at the Taj Samudra Hotel in Colombo. Sri Lanka's Minister of Environment Anura Priyadarshana Yapa was the chief guest of the inaugural ceremony of the program. An awareness program on minimal use of green gas was held on the first day. Increases in emissions in greenhouse gases are believed to be the primary cause of climate change and its impacts and the inventories that can provide accurate information of these emissions and trends are critically important. Workshops on Greenhouse Gas Inventories in Asia (WGIA) have been conducted annually since 2003. WGIA's promote information exchange in the region to support countries' efforts to improve the quality of greenhouse gas inventories.

Puzzling death of chicken

Source: Daily News, Bingiriya

Date: 1 February 2012

The Department of Livestock and Animal Husbandry has investigated the death of a large number of chickens at a farm in the Bingiriya area in the Kurunegala district. It has been found that one of the dead chickens had bird flu symptoms. However it was not confirmed that the death was caused by bird flu. A special discussion was held at the Ministry of Health under Additional Secretary of Health P Mahipala yesterday afternoon. Two teams of specialist doctors from the Contagious Disease Research division are scheduled to visit the Bingiriya and nearby areas today. As a precautionary step, staff at Bingiriya, Chilaw and Hettipola hospitals are being briefed about containing the spread and treatment of the disease, in accordance with the World Health Organisation guidelines.

US\$22.2 million IFAD loan to Sri Lanka for poverty reduction

Source: Relief Web, Rome

Date: 1 February 2012

Rome– The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) will provide a US\$22.23 million loan to the Republic of Sri Lanka for improved irrigation infrastructure and crop diversification, and help create new market opportunities for smallholder farmers. Asitha Perera, Ambassador of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and Kanayo F. Nwanze, President of IFAD, today signed the loan agreement for the Iranamadu Irrigation Development Project. To respond to the needs of smallholder farmers in the Kilinochchi district of the Northern province, the project will improve the downstream irrigation infrastructure of the Iranamadu reservoir. The reservoir, which has not been maintained adequately for many years, will be rehabilitated to increase its water-holding capacity. The project is expected to benefit about 7,000 households. In addition, farmers will receive training on water saving management methods that include climate change adaptation and mitigation measures such as rainwater harvesting. This will enable them to use irrigation water more efficiently for sustaining their crops and contract farming. Women's groups would also be formed and strengthened by offering training and development of vegetable production. Infrastructure development is a high priority of the government to accelerate growth in the country. Since 1978, with this new programme, IFAD will have financed 16 programmes and projects in Sri Lanka for a total investment of about \$ 400 million benefitting more than 500,000 households.