

Death toll rises in Turkey

By Lara Handler
WORLD EDITOR

A second earthquake hit Turkey this past Tuesday, this one measuring a comparatively low 4.7-magnitude on the Richter scale.

However, the death rate continues to rise as Turkey faces the aftermath of last Tuesday's 7.4-magnitude quake. As the country continues to face the challenge of rescuing survivors, treating the injured and sick, caring for the homeless, and burying the dead, acid rain added to the problems on Monday.

The first earthquake occurred a week ago Tuesday, August 17, centered in Izmit in the northwestern region of Turkey.

Although it lasted a mere 45 seconds, the quake killed thousands as buildings and homes collapsed just past 3 a.m.

This region has had several earthquakes in the past decade, but is rampant with



Turkey has been ravaged by natural disasters.

poorly-built structures and un-enforced building codes.

In addition to the deaths and injuries caused by the quake itself, the country now is confronted with the spread

of disease and the acid rain problem.

The earthquake caused a fire to burn for days at Turkey's largest oil refinery, and the rain is bringing the toxins released into the air down into the streets already crowded by thousands of homeless survivors.

The World Health Organization says the largest threat is now "poor sanitation, contaminated water, and the interruption of routine medical care," as well as the large volume of unburied bodies which remain in cities and

countryside.

Some people are even resorting to wearing face masks to avoid breathing air that is feared to bring diseases such as typhoid fever or dysentery.

Teams of outside help continue to assist Turkey, though other countries' medical and help crews are now beginning to leave the country as Turkey's own army and other organizations take over.

The government there has been criticized for being slow to mobilize and give help, but it cites destroyed telephones and roads as being a reason for this, and increased patriotism has been seen throughout the recent efforts to rescue and help survivors.

Still, as the death toll rose to 17,997 this Tuesday and 200,000 people still remain homeless, Turkey's government is continuing to prepare for the future.

As of now, many countries are sending food and tents, the United States has stationed six ships off the coast of Turkey to prepare clean drinking water, and in a sobering move, the United Nations currently has plans to supply an additional 45,000 body bags to the earthquake teams in Turkey.

India's population hits billion mark

By Lara Handler
WORLD EDITOR

India may be the second country ever to reach one billion people. India's census commission projected that the billion mark would not be passed until May of 2000, but the U.N. Population Division estimated that on August 15th, last Sunday and also India's Independence Day, the country would see the billionth child born.

India is known for its huge

population; the size of the country is roughly one-third of the United States, yet the number of people in India is approximately four times greater than the United States' 270,311,756 citizens (estimated by the CIA in 1998).

Only China with its 1.27 billion people exceeds India's population, and as India now nears being the second country to reach the billion milestone, it faces issues of concern.

In an AP news report on August 15, the day estimated to bring the billionth baby, a citizen worried that more children will also cause more "air pollution, noise pollution, unemployment, [and] poverty."

Demographer Ashish Bose stressed that already India is a country where 400 million people are illiterate, 350 million people live in a state of poverty, and crop land per person has been reduced by one-half since 1960.

In newspaper ads celebrating India's military success defeating Pakistan during the border conflicts in Kashmir, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee referred with apparent pride to the billion

Indian citizens by proclaiming "Nothing is impossible when one [billion] Indians work together." Still, the government has maintained cheap or free birth control programs since the early 1950s, indicating some concern over the population explosion.

The birth rate has fallen in recent years from 42 to 27 births per 1,000 people, but still many Indians say that the problem with population control is not due to the success or lack thereof with government programs, but to societal attitudes and tradition. Women's literacy is approximately half of men's in many regions and pressure to reproduce early remains strong.

Women often do not know of birth control methods or are not allowed by family members to use them. Sarj Pachauri of

the nonprofit Population Council in the poor rural state of Bihar explains, "Many women do not want large families anymore, but this is still a patriarchal society, where men make the decisions on reproduction. Ask a woman in Bihar if she wants more children, and she will say no. Ask her if she is using [birth control], and she will say no."

As India's cities and rural areas show growing evidence of the burgeoning number of Indian people, the country as a whole faces the continued

question of how to meet the needs of a billion people. As a story in the Greensboro News and Record points



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Behavior like this just adds to the problem.

out, just in the time alone that it took you to read a story of this size, India now has a whopping 150 more babies to feed, clothe, and house.

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