

More than 4,000 killed in Nepal quake

By **TODD PITMAN**
Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal — For hours after Nepal was shaken by one of the most intense earthquakes here in nearly a century, 12-year-old Neha Chumda screamed for help.

She had been inside her family's four-story villa in Kathmandu when the tremor struck unexpectedly Saturday. And in the life-or-death seconds that followed — when her home swayed at its walls began cracking apart — she and 11 members of her family rushed to get outside.

They all made it — except Neha, who was pinned in a room between the second and third floors, which had collapsed onto of each other.

"She was crying for so long, we tried to help her," Transport Minister Tek Bahadur Garung said of the girl, who is the daughter of one of his cousins.

The cries turned faint, then ceased by the time Nepalese army troops and security forces began trying to break through the front of the house to pry Neha out at 4 p.m. Saturday. Then for a day and a half the soldiers used hammers, crowbars, shovels and a generator-powered saw and small jack-hammer to tear open the front of the house, then bust through the ceiling into the second floor.

By Monday morning, they could see Neha's lifeless body curled up, covered in dust, a single elbow poking out above them. Then, at 10 a.m. — 42 hours after the rescue operation began — they finally pulled her out. They lowered her gently into a rainbow colored blanket that served as a makeshift stretcher, then placed her on the grassy ground outside, where four members of her



Rescue teams carry a body dug out of the collapsed Sitapyla church Monday in Kathmandu, Nepal. A strong earthquake shook Nepal's capital and the densely populated Kathmandu Valley on Saturday.

AP Photo/Wally Santana

family wept, their red-eyes filled with tears.

"We have manpower. But we don't have nearly enough equipment to do the job," Garung said of his government's rescue efforts. "We need help from every country that will give it. We need bulldozers, cranes, scaffolding, machinery."

Speaking outside the girl's home in a black tracksuit, with dozens of distraught residents looking on, Garung said: "There are a lot of dead bodies here and it's very difficult to get them out. We can't do it with crowbars" alone.

The estimated death toll from Nepal's earthquake soared past 4,000, and could go much higher if it turns out that vulnerable mountain villages

— where information is still scarce and rescue workers are still struggling to reach — were hit hard.

The catastrophe has overwhelmed Nepal's government. Garung said the Cabinet was meeting daily, but "we don't know what to do in such a situation ... this is very hard. It's a big problem. It's a mess."

Although the vast majority of Kathmandu's five and 10-story buildings actually withstood the quake and still stand, many have been damaged and it's unclear whether they are still safe. On the four-lane road that runs up a hill near Neha's home, most buildings looked undamaged. But half a dozen were in ruins and several multi-story apartment blocks were tilting precariously, one at a 60-degree angle.

BRIEFLY

Historic Supreme Court arguments: Should gay marriage be law of the land?

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tuesday is a potential watershed moment for America's gay and lesbian couples. After rapid changes that have made same-sex marriage legal in all but 14 states, the Supreme Court will hear arguments over whether it should be the law of the land.

All eyes will be on the justices for any signals that they are prepared to rule that the Constitution forbids states from defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman. On the sidewalk outside, people have been waiting in line since Friday for prized seats for the historic arguments.



The cases before the court come from Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee, all of which had their marriage bans upheld by the federal appeals court in Cincinnati in November. That is the only federal appeals court that has ruled in favor of the states since the Supreme Court in 2013 struck down part of the federal anti-gay marriage law.

The first state to allow gay and lesbian couples to marry was Massachusetts, in 2004. Even as recently as October, barely a third of the states permitted it. Now, same-sex couples can marry in 36 states and the District of Columbia, a dramatic change in the law that has been accompanied by an equally fast shift in public opinion.

Now that everyone else has weighed in through mountains of legal briefs, the justices get to say, or at least hint, what they will decide. On Tuesday, five lawyers will present arguments over 2½ hours to help the court conclude whether, on this question, the 14 remaining states must join the rest of the country.

Obama administration seeks to advance Iran deal

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration moved on two fronts Monday to advance its nuclear diplomacy with Iran, with talks between top U.S. and Iranian diplomats and an aggressive effort to sell the emerging deal to skeptical American lawmakers and constituencies.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met at the residence of Iran's ambassador to the United Nations in New York for the first time since April 2, when world powers and Iran sealed a framework agreement that would limit Iran's ability to build a nuclear weapon. They now have little more than two months to meet their own June 30 deadline for a comprehensive accord.

Neither man spoke to reporters as the meeting got underway, but earlier Kerry told a U.N. conference on nuclear non-proliferation that a deal would make the world a safer place. "I want you to know the hard work is far from over and some key issues remain unresolved," he said. "But we are, in fact, closer than ever to the good comprehensive deal that we have been seeking. And if we can get there, the entire world will be safer."

In Washington, lead U.S. negotiator Wendy Sherman told a conference of reform Jews that diplomatic collapse would leave Iran perilously close to nuclear weapons capacity. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said a final agreement would in some ways be tougher than what the U.S. has outlined thus far.

All the activity was taking place before the Senate begins debate Tuesday over empowering Congress to review and possibly reject any nuclear pact. Republican presidential candidates are lining up to oppose any deal with a government the U.S. considers the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism and to show their support for Israel.

Riot, looting prompt state of emergency in Baltimore

BALTIMORE (AP) — Rioters plunged part of Baltimore into chaos Monday, torching a pharmacy, setting police cars ablaze and throwing bricks at officers hours after thousands mourned the man who died from a severe spinal injury he suffered in police custody.

The governor declared a state of emergency and called in the National Guard to restore order. A weeklong, daily curfew was imposed beginning Tuesday from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., the mayor said. At least 15 officers were hurt, and some two dozen people were arrested. Two officers remained hospitalized, police said.

Officers wearing helmets and wielding shields occasionally used pepper spray to keep the rioters back. For the most part, though, they relied on line formations to keep protesters at bay.

Monday's riot was the latest flare-up over the mysterious death of Freddie Gray, whose fatal encounter with officers came amid the national debate over police use of force, especially when black suspects are involved. Gray was African-American. Police have declined to specify the races of the six officers involved in his arrest, all of whom have been



AP Photo/Patrick Semansky

A demonstrator raises his fist as police stand in formation as a store burns, Monday during unrest following the funeral of Freddie Gray in Baltimore.

suspended with pay while they are under investigation.

Emergency officials were constantly thwarted as they tried to restore calm. Firefighters trying to put out a blaze at a CVS store were hindered by someone who sliced holes in a hose connected to a fire hydrant, spraying water all over the street and nearby buildings.

The smell of burned rubber wafted in the air in one neighborhood where youths were looting a liquor store. Police stood still nearby as people drank looted alcohol. Glass and trash littered the streets, and small fires were scattered about. One person from a church tried to shout

something from a megaphone as two cars burned.

"Too many people have spent generations building up this city for it to be destroyed by thugs, who in a very senseless way, are trying to tear down what so many have fought for, tearing down businesses, tearing down and destroying property, things that we know will impact our community for years," said Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, a lifelong resident of the city.

Gray's family was shocked by the violence and was lying low; instead, they hoped to organize a peace march later in the week, said family attorney Billy

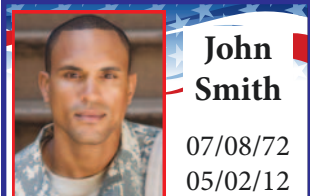
Murphy. He said they did not know the riot was going to happen and urged calm.

"They don't want this movement nationally to be marred by violence," he said. "It makes no sense."

Police urged parents to locate their children and bring them home. Many of those on the streets appeared to be African-American youths, wearing backpacks and khaki pants that are a part of many public school uniforms.

The riot broke out just as high school let out, and at a key city bus depot for student commuters around Mondawmin Mall, a shopping area northwest of downtown Baltimore. It shifted about a mile away later to the heart of an older shopping district and near where Gray first encountered police. Both commercial areas are in African-American neighborhoods.

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