

Aid begins arriving in Nepal’s remote villages

Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal — The first supplies of food aid began reaching remote, earthquake-shattered mountain villages in Nepal on Wednesday, while thousands clamored to board buses out of Kathmandu, either to check on rural relatives or for fear of spending yet another night in the damaged capital.

Frustration over the slow delivery of humanitarian aid boiled over in a protest in the city, with about 200 people facing off with police and blocking traffic.

The protest was comparatively small and no demonstrators were detained. But it reflected growing anger over bottlenecks that delayed much-needed relief four days after the powerful earthquake that killed more than 5,000 people, injured twice that many and left tens of thousands homeless. Police, meanwhile, arrested dozens of people on suspicion of looting or causing panic by spreading rumors of another big quake.

Helicopters finally brought food, temporary shelter and other aid to hamlets north of Kathmandu in the mountainous Gorkha District near the epicenter of Saturday’s 7.8-magnitude quake. Entire clusters of homes there were reduced to piles of stone and splintered wood. Women greeted the delivery with repeated cries of “We are hungry!”

While the death toll in the village of Gumda was low — only five people were killed and 20 were injured among 1,300 residents — most had lost their homes and desperately needed temporary shelter, along with the 40-kilogram (90-pound) sacks of rice that were delivered Wednesday. Adding to residents’ misery was the rain that has fallen periodically since the quake and hampered helicopter aid flights.

The U.N. World Food Program warned that it will take time for food and



AP Photo/Bernat Amangue

People clear the debris from damage caused by Saturday’s earthquake in Sakhu, on the outskirts of Kathmandu, Nepal on Wednesday.

other supplies to reach more remote communities that have been cut off by landslides.

“More helicopters, more personnel and certainly more relief supplies, including medical teams, shelter, tents, water and sanitation and food, are obviously needed,” said the program’s Geoff Pinnock, who was coordinating the flights.

With more than 8 million Nepalese affected by the earthquake, including 1.4 million who need immediate food assistance, Pinnock said the effort would continue for months.

President Barack Obama called Prime Minister Sushil Koirala and discussed U.S. military and civilian efforts already underway to help Nepal, the White House said.

Police said the official death toll in Nepal had reached 5,266 as of late Wednesday. That figure did not include the 19 people killed at Mount Everest — five foreign climbers and 14 Nepalese Sherpa guides — when the quake unleashed an avalanche at base camp.

At least 210 foreign trekkers and residents stranded in the Lantang area

north of Kathmandu had been rescued, government administrator Gautam Rimal said. The area, which borders Tibet, is popular with tourists.

In Kathmandu, where most buildings were spared complete collapse, many residents — fearing aftershocks — continued to camp in parks and other open spaces.

But people were starting to leave tent cities like those in Kathmandu’s Tudikhel area. Anop Bhattachan and more than two dozen relatives have been sleeping on the field since Saturday, but he said they now want to get out of the city.

Thousands waited at bus stations in Kathmandu, hoping to reach their hometowns in rural areas. Some wanted to check on the fate of family and loved ones in the quake, while others were fearful of more aftershocks in the city.

“I am hoping to get on a bus, any bus heading out of Kathmandu. I am too scared to be staying in Kathmandu,” said Raja Gurung, who wanted to get to his home in western Nepal. “The house near my rented apartment collapsed. It was horrible. I have not gone

indoors in many days. I would rather leave than live a life of fear in Kathmandu.”

Despite Wednesday’s small protest, there were signs that life was inching back to normal in the capital. Banks opened for a few hours and refilled their ATMs with cash, some shops reopened and vendors returned to the streets.

Even though Nabin and Laxmi Shrestha remained frightened about aftershocks, the husband and wife have reopened their tea shop.

“I’m scared, but people are hungry. We need to feed them,” Laxmi Shrestha said.

Planes carrying food and other supplies have been steadily arriving at Kathmandu’s small airport, but the aid distribution process remains fairly chaotic, with Nepalese officials having difficulty directing the flow of emergency supplies.

A man who was freed after being trapped for 82 hours in a collapsed hotel gave details of his ordeal, saying he drank his own urine to survive.

“I had some hope, but by yesterday I’d given up,” Rishi Khanal told The Associated Press from his hospital bed Wednesday.

\$4 million in U.S. projects aim to protect sage grouse habitat

BOISE (AP) — Interior Secretary Sally Jewell on Wednesday announced more than \$4 million in projects in four states as part of a wildfire-fighting strategy to protect a wide swath of intermountain West sagebrush country that supports cattle ranching and is home to a struggling bird species.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management will use the money in Idaho, Utah, Nevada and Oregon to counter wildfire threats, invasive grasses and flammable juniper trees encroaching in native sagebrush habitat.

“These projects will not only improve rangeland health, but also help mitigate the risks to local economies that depend on healthy lands,” Jewell said in a statement.

The projects follow Jewell’s order in January calling for a “science based” strategy that safeguards the greater sage grouse while contending with wildfires that have grown larger over the years and have been especially destructive in the Great Basin region.

The wide-ranging bird found in 11 states is under consideration for federal protection, and another giant habitat-consuming fire could factor into the decision. Just the potential listing has put on hold development of wind farms and oil and gas drilling plans in some areas. Experts say an endangered-species listing could damage Western states’ economies.

Though Congress voted last year to withhold funding to list the sage grouse as threatened or endangered, protections could complicate energy development.

The \$4 million in projects could help sway decision-makers.

“I think a lot of people were hoping to see something like this,” said John Freemuth, a Boise State University professor and

public lands expert, noting that the collaborative efforts by ranchers, environmentalists and state and federal officials to protect sage grouse habitat.

“It’s a reward,” he said. “You’re seeing the Interior Department saying here is a bigger commitment we can make that will further the bigger effort so that there won’t be a listing of greater sage grouse.”

Idaho will receive \$1.78 million to be used to create fuel breaks along transportation corridors in the southwest part of the state that will help firefighters halt wildfires.

The \$1.03 million for Oregon will be used for prescribed fires to take out juniper stands, mechanical thinning of juniper stands and planting native grasses. Juniper trees soak up the limited amount of water other plants depend on.

Utah will receive \$811,000 for projects that include removing juniper stands and seeding with native plants and grasses.

Nevada will get \$638,000 for projects that include mowing along roadways to reduce fire potential, seeding native plants and preventing the spread of cheatgrass, an invasive species that increases risks for fires.

“The BLM is targeting our existing resources to address the biggest threats to the West’s most productive sage grouse habitat,” agency Director Neil Kornze said in a statement. “By strategically focusing our fire prevention and restoration efforts, we are laying the foundation for long-term conservation of the healthy rangelands that help define and sustain the West and its people.”

Jewell said in March that the strategy for this year’s wildfire season would prioritize the protection of sage grouse habitat during any blazes.

Former U.S. commander: Take nuclear missiles off high alert

WASHINGTON (AP) — Taking U.S. and Russian missiles off high alert could keep a possible cyberattack from starting a nuclear war, a former commander of U.S. nuclear forces says, but neither country appears willing to increase the lead-time to prepare the weapons for launch.

Retired Gen. James Cartwright said in an interview that “de-alerting” nuclear arsenals could foil hackers by reducing the chance of firing a weapon in response to a false warning of attack.

Essentially adding a longer fuse can be done without eroding the weapons’ deterrent value, said Cartwright, who headed Strategic Command from 2004 to 2007 and was vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before retiring in 2011.

The Obama administration has considered and rejected the idea before of taking nuclear missiles off high alert. There appears to be little near-term chance that Moscow would agree to pursue this or any other kind of nuclear arms control measure, given the deteriorating U.S.-Russian relations after Russia’s intervention in Ukraine.

Police: Moose fatally stabbed in Alaska park; 3 men arrested

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Three men suspected of stabbing a yearling moose to death in a wooded Anchorage park were arraigned Wednesday in Anchorage District Court.

Twenty-five-year-old Johnathan Candelario, 33-year-old Nick Johnston and 28-year-old James Galloway were arrested Tuesday night at Russian Jack Springs Park.

BRIEFLY

They’re charged with felony cruelty to animals, evidence tampering and wanton waste of big game.

Bail for Candelario and Johnston is set at \$10,000 with an additional \$2,500 cash performance bond. Bail for Galloway, who has no criminal convictions in Alaska, was set at \$5,000.

Three witnesses told police they saw the men punching the moose and walking away. They contacted the suspects and spotted blood on Candelario’s jacket.

Prosecutors say a police dog retracing the men’s route alerted officers to three knives stashed in a pipe.

California ramps up efforts to cut gas emissions

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Building on California’s ambitious effort to curb

greenhouse gas emissions, Gov. Jerry Brown on Wednesday called on the state to further slash its carbon footprint over the next 15 years.

Brown set a new target of reducing emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, calling it the most aggressive benchmark enacted by a government in North America.

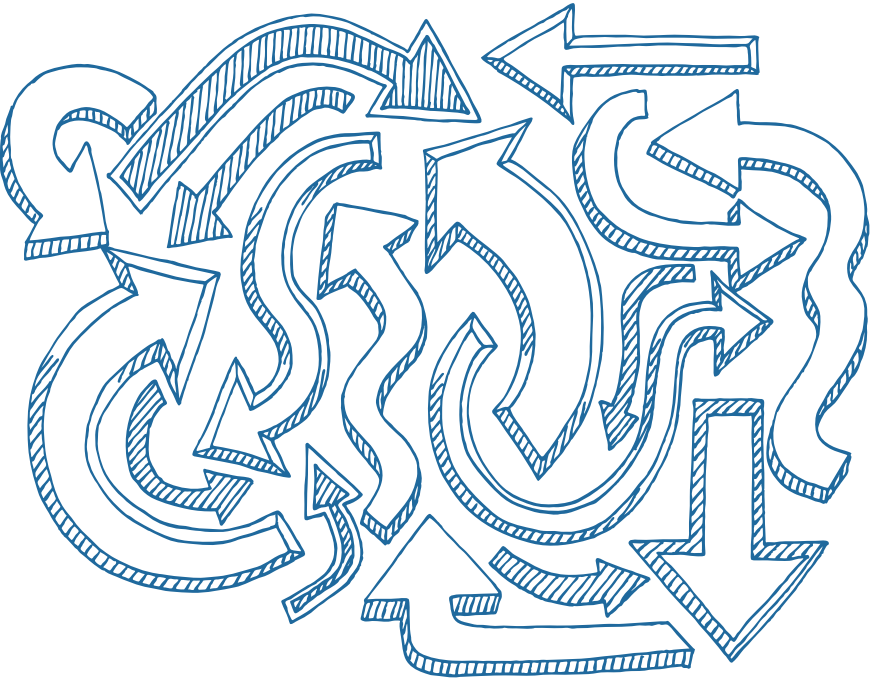
The goal is a mile marker on the way to cutting emissions by 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050 that was set by Brown’s predecessor, former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

California currently is on track to meet a goal of cutting carbon emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, partly by forcing companies to pay for their pollution.

The state’s cap-and-trade program, launched nearly three years ago, offers one of the few laboratories on how to reduce heat-trapping emissions.

WHEN PUBLIC NOTICES REACH THE PUBLIC, EVERYONE BENEFITS

SOME OFFICIALS WANT TO MOVE NOTICES FROM NEWSPAPERS TO GOVERNMENT-RUN WEBSITES - WHERE THEY MAY NOT BE EASILY FOUND



2 OUT OF 3

US ADULTS READ A NEWSPAPER IN PRINT OR ONLINE DURING THE WEEK



WHY TRY TO FIX SOMETHING THAT ISN'T BROKEN

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