

Cambodia inaugurates memorial at Khmer Rouge genocide museum

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Cambodian officials have inaugurated a memorial at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum to remember more than 12,000 people tortured at the site when it was a Khmer Rouge prison.

Buddhist monks chanted prayers at a ceremony at the museum, a former high school that the Khmer Rouge converted into a prison after taking power in 1975.

Deputy Prime Minister Sok An presided over the ceremony, which was attended by representatives from the United Nations and a U.N.-backed tribunal trying former Khmer Rouge officials.

He said the 20-foot-high memorial, designed like a Buddhist stupa, will “serve as an educational tool for the next generations to remember and prevent the return of such a dark regime.”

An estimated 1.7 million people died as a result of the Khmer Rouge’s radical policies from 1975 to 1979.

Tuol Sleng was one of a number of torture and execution centers. The tribunal has identified 12,272 victims who passed through its gates, but the actual number is believed to be around 16,000. Virtually all were taken to the prison after being tortured and killed elsewhere. Only a handful survived.

The memorial replaces a similar



GENOCIDE MUSEUM. Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Sok An, center, prays with a Buddhist monk, left, during the opening ceremony of a memorial in Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The memorial built at the museum, which remembers at least 12,000 people tortured and killed there during the radical Khmer Rouge regime, was officially inaugurated last month. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)

one that disintegrated inside the Tuol Sleng complex and is part of a renovation of the museum that began in 2010.

Sok An rejected criticism from human-rights groups that the government is interfering in the Khmer Rouge tribunal. “I wish to reiterate that the government will not intervene, will not interfere with the internal affairs of the court,” he said.

Prime Minister Hun Sen warned recently that adding new defendants could incite former Khmer Rouge

members to start a civil war, and that the court’s investigations had “almost gone beyond the limit.” He has made similar comments on many occasions.

Last month, the tribunal indicted two more suspects — former Khmer Rouge navy chief Meas Muth and former district commander Im Chaem. They were charged with homicide and crimes against humanity, including enslavement and persecution on political and ethnic grounds.

Two of the group’s top surviving leaders received life sentences last August for crimes against humanity.

Japan opts for massive, costly sea wall to fend off tsunamis

By Elaine Kurtenbach
AP Business Writer

SENDAI, Japan — More than four years after a towering tsunami ravaged much of Japan’s northeastern coast, efforts to fend off future disasters are focusing on a nearly 250-mile chain of cement sea walls, at places nearly five stories high.

Opponents of the 820 billion yen (\$6.8 billion) plan argue that the massive concrete barriers will damage marine ecology and scenery, hinder vital fisheries, and actually do little to protect residents who are mostly supposed to relocate to higher ground. Those in favor say the sea walls are a necessary evil and one that will provide some jobs, at least for a time.

In the northern fishing port of Osabe, Kazutoshi Musashi chafes at the 41-foot-high concrete barrier blocking his view of the sea.

“The reality is that it looks like the wall of a jail,” said Musashi, 46, who lived on the seaside before the tsunami struck Osabe and has moved inland since.

Pouring concrete for public works is a staple strategy for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its backers in big business and construction, and local officials tend to go along with such plans.

The paradox of such projects, experts say, is that while they may reduce some damage, they can foster complacency. That can be a grave risk along coastlines vulnerable to tsunamis, storm surges, and other natural disasters. At least some of the 18,500 people who died or went missing in the 2011 disasters failed to heed warnings to escape in time.

Tsuneaki Iguchi was mayor of Iwanuma, a town just south of the region’s biggest city, Sendai, when the tsunami triggered by a magnitude-9 earthquake just off the coast inundated half of its area.

A 24-foot-high sea wall built years earlier to help stave off erosion of Iwanuma’s beaches slowed the wall of water, as did stands of tall, thin pine trees planted along the coast. But the tsunami still swept up to three miles inland. Passengers and staff watched from the upper floors and roof of the airport as the waves carried off cars, buildings, and aircraft, smashing most homes in densely populated suburbs not far from the beach.

The city repaired the broken sea walls but doesn’t plan to make them any taller. Instead, Iguchi was one of the first local officials to back a plan championed by former Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa to plant mixed forests along the coasts on tall mounds of soil or rubble, to help create a living “green wall” that would persist long after the concrete of the bigger, manmade structures has



CEMENTING THE COASTLINE. A Shinto shrine gate remains standing on a hill while sea walls are built in the waterfront area of Rikuzentakata, Iwate prefecture, northeastern Japan. Four years after a towering tsunami ravaged much of Japan’s northeastern coast, efforts to fend off future disasters are focusing on a nearly 250-mile chain of cement sea walls, at places nearly five stories high. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

crumbled.

“We don’t need the sea wall to be higher. What we do need is for everyone to evacuate,” Iguchi said.

“The safest thing is for people to live on higher ground and for people’s homes and their workplaces to be in separate locations. If we do that, we don’t need to have a ‘Great Wall,’” he said.

While the lack of basic infrastructure can be catastrophic in developing countries, too heavy a reliance on such safeguards can lead communities to be too complacent at times, says Margareta Wahlstrom, head of the U.N.’s Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

“There’s a bit of an overbelief in technology as a solution, even though everything we have learned demonstrates that people’s own insights and instincts are really what makes a difference, and technology in fact makes us a bit more vulnerable,” Wahlstrom said in an interview ahead of a recent conference in Sendai convened to draft a new framework for reducing disaster risks.

In the steelmaking town of Kamaishi, more than 1,000 people died in the 2011 tsunami, but most school students fled to safety zones immediately after the earthquake, thanks to training by a civil engineering professor, Toshitaka Katada.

The risk is not confined to Japan, said Maarten van Aalst, director of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Center, who sees this in the attitudes of fellow Dutch people who trust in their low-lying country’s defenses against the sea.

“The public impression of safety is so high, they would have no idea what to do in case of a catastrophe,” he said.

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RELIC RETRIEVAL. A Chinese Buddha statue is seen at the Hungarian Natural History Museum in Budapest, Hungary. Chinese authorities are gathering evidence that a statue that was displayed at a mummy exhibit in Hungary belongs to a village in southeastern China, ahead of possible diplomatic talks to retrieve the treasure, according to an official. The investigation followed a report by the official Xinhua News Agency that the mummy statue featured at the MummyWorld Exhibition in Budapest was stolen from Yangchun village in Fujian province in 1995. (AP Photo/Xinhua, Attila Volgyi)

China seeks evidence for possible return of mummy statute

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese authorities are gathering evidence that a statue that was displayed at a mummy exhibit in Hungary belongs to a village in southeastern China, ahead of possible diplomatic talks to retrieve the treasure, according to an official.

The investigation followed a report by the official Xinhua News Agency that the mummy statue featured at the MummyWorld Exhibition in Budapest was stolen from Yangchun village in Fujian province in 1995.

Yu Shengfu, an official at a cultural heritage bureau in Fujian, said that the conclusion is preliminary and that Chinese authorities are gathering more proof, including photos, to show that the piece owned by a private Dutch collector belongs to the Chinese village.

The mummy-containing statue has been pulled from the exhibit, which runs through May 17 in Budapest.

The Hungarian Natural History Museum, the host of the exhibit, said the piece was removed and sent back to the Netherlands upon request of a lending partner but did not give further details.

The statue is believed to contain the mummified body of a Yangchun man who later became a well-respected Buddhist monk during China’s Song Dynasty (960-1279), and the statue had been worshipped since then in the village temple, Xinhua said.

Yangchun villagers, who have kept the statue’s hat and clothes since the 1995 theft, “burst into tears” and “lit fireworks” after seeing the statue on television, Xinhua said.

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8			6	7			2
	7						1
3		6		9	5		8
		1		3		7	
	4		2		9		6
		3		6		8	
7		9		2		4	1
	6						3
4			1	8			5

Difficulty level: Easy

#86727

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that the digits 1 through 9 appear one time each in every row, column, and 3x3 box.

Solution to last week’s puzzle

Puzzle #84916 (Hard)

All solutions available at <www.sudoku.com>.

5	1	8	6	4	7	3	9	2
2	9	3	1	8	5	6	4	7
4	6	7	9	2	3	8	5	1
3	8	6	5	9	2	7	1	4
1	2	5	8	7	4	9	3	6
9	7	4	3	6	1	5	2	8
7	3	9	2	1	8	4	6	5
6	4	2	7	5	9	1	8	3
8	5	1	4	3	6	2	7	9