

DISASTERS UPDATE

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TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

National

India ranked 77 in disaster risk index of the world

IANAS, August 26, 2016 15:08 IST



When it comes to aid measures following extreme natural events, the challenges mostly lie in the 'last mile' of the logistics chain. Picture shows residents being rescued in a boat during the floods in Chennai in December, 2015. Photo: Special Arrangement

While Bangladesh is among the top five countries at risk of disaster, India ranks 77 on the World Risk Index - marginally better positioned than Pakistan which is placed at 72.

The index is part of the World Risk Report 2016 released on Thursday by the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) and Bundnis Entwicklung Hilft in cooperation with the University of Stuttgart in Germany.

The index assessed the risk of disaster in 171 countries through the combined analysis of natural hazards and societal vulnerabilities.

Ranking No.1, the island state of Vanuatu displayed the greatest risk in 2016.

The researchers concluded in the report that lack of critical infrastructure and weak logistic chains substantially increase the risk that an extreme natural event will become a disaster.

"When it comes to aid measures following extreme natural events, the challenges mostly lie in the 'last mile' of the logistics chain: organising transportation despite destroyed streets or bridges and ensuring fair distribution when there is a shortage of (for example) water, food, and shelter," explained Peter Mucke, Project Manager of the World Risk Report and Managing Director of Bundnis Entwicklung Hilft.

Crumbling transport routes, unreliable electricity grids, and dilapidated buildings not only hinder humanitarian aid from overseas, but also delay crucial aid for those affected in the event of a disaster, Mucke noted.

“The international community must invest more in the establishment and development of critical infrastructure even before disasters occur,” Matthias Garschagen, Scientific Director for the report and Lead Scientist at United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, observed.

“Sufficient, high-quality infrastructure, which is well-managed institutionally, can not only prevent the often catastrophic consequences of natural hazards such as flooding or storms, but it can also play a crucial role in the distribution of humanitarian aid supplies in the event of a disaster. Critical infrastructure can thus reduce the risk of natural hazards for populations and absorb economic losses,” Garschagen said.

International

Police: 20 killed, 17 injured in Nepal bus accident

AP, August 26, 2016 12:07 IST

At least 20 people were killed and another 17 hurt when bus drove off a highway in Nepal and plunged into a river on Friday, police said.

Police office said the bus rolled about 100 meters (330 feet) down the slope early Friday and crashed into the fast-flowing Trishuli river near Chandibhanjyang, about 120 kilometres (75 miles) west of the capital, Kathmandu.

Police and villagers were helping the injured and pulling the dead from wreckage, which was mostly submerged in the river. Police are investigating the cause of the pre-dawn accident.

Poorly maintained roads, vehicles

Road accidents in mountainous Nepal are generally blamed on poorly maintained vehicles and roads.

Earlier this month, an overcrowded bus veered off a mountain trail in eastern Nepal, killing at least 33 people and injuring 28 others.

Strong aftershocks rattle devastated earthquake zone in Italy

AP, August 26, 2016 15:48 IST



Getty Images

Emergency workers search the rubble of a building that was destroyed during an earthquake, in Amatrice, Italy on Thursday. Photo: Carl Court

Strong aftershocks rattled residents and rescue crews alike Friday as hopes began to dim that firefighters would find any more survivors from Italy's earthquake. The first funerals were scheduled to be observed for some of the 267 dead.

Some of hard-hit Amatrice's crumbled buildings suffered more cracks after the biggest aftershock of the morning struck at 6-28 a.m. The U.S. Geological Service said it had a magnitude of 4.7, while the Italian geophysics institute measured it at 4.8.

Seismic area

The aftershock was preceded by more than a dozen weaker ones overnight and was followed by another nine in the subsequent hour some of the nearly 1,000 aftershocks that have rocked the seismic area of Italy's central Apennine Mountains in the two days since the original quake Wednesday.

Rescue efforts continued through the night, but more than a day-and-a-half had passed since the last person was extracted alive from the rubble. While Premier Matteo Renzi hailed the fact that 215 people had been rescued since the quake, civil protection officials reported only a steadily rising death toll that stood early on Friday at 267.

Nevertheless, civil protection operations chief Immacolata Postiglione insisted that the rescue effort continued in full, "in search of other people trapped in the rubble."

Italian news reports said the first funerals were to be observed on Friday for some of the victims -- in Rome, for the son of a local police chief; in Pomezia Terme for two grandmothers and their two grandchildren

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