



Afghan woman goes from refugee to military pilot

POLITICAL LIMBO: WHAT NEXT FOR RENZI, ITALY?



ACEH PROVINCE: The body of a young earthquake victim is carried in Pidie Jaya. — AFP

POWERFUL QUAKE KILLS 97 IN INDONESIA

RESCUERS BEGIN MASSIVE SCRABBLE FOR SURVIVORS

MEUREUDU: A strong earthquake rocked Indonesia's Aceh province early yesterday, killing nearly 100 people and sparking a frantic rescue effort in the rubble of dozens of collapsed and damaged buildings. Maj Gen Tatang Sulaiman, chief of the army in Aceh province, said at least 97 died while four people were pulled from the rubble alive. Another four or five are known to be buried, but he didn't say if they were dead or alive. The Indonesian government declared a two-week emergency period in Aceh.

The rescue effort involving thousands of search officials, villagers, soldiers and police is concentrated on Meureudu, a severely affected town in Pidie Jaya district near the epicenter. Excavators were trying to remove debris from shop houses and other buildings where people were believed buried. TV footage showed rescuers in orange uniforms shining flashlights into the interiors of broken buildings as they searched for signs of life.

The province's disaster mitigation agency said more than 600 people were injured. The national disaster agency said some 245 buildings were seriously damaged or destroyed, mostly in Pidie Jaya, including 14 mosques. The rest were mainly dwellings and shop houses. Roads also cracked and power poles toppled over.

The US Geological Survey said the 6.5-magnitude earthquake struck at 5:03 am and was centered about 19 kilometers southeast of Sigli, a town near the northern tip of Aceh, at a depth of 17 kilometers. The agency had initially placed the epicenter undersea. It did not generate a tsunami. For Acehese, the quake was a terrifying reminder of their region's vulnerability to natural disasters. More than 100,000 died in Aceh after a Dec 26, 2004, earthquake triggered a devastating tsunami.

Memories of '04

"It was very bad, the tremors felt even stronger than the 2004 earthquake," said Musman Aziz, a Meureudu resident. "I was so scared the tsunami was coming." Aiyub Abbas, the chief of Pidie Jaya district, said there was urgent need for emergency supplies and excavation equipment to move

heavy debris. Footage showed rescue personnel taking bodies in black bags away from the rubble.

Muhammad Reza Faisal, director of the general hospital in Pidie Jaya, said the facility was overwhelmed with the numbers of injured and many people were being treated in tents pitched on its grounds. He said five of the quake victims died at the hospital. In the capital, Jakarta, President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo said he had ordered all government agencies to take part in the rescue efforts for Aceh, a conservative province that has considerable autonomy from the central government under a peace deal with separatists. Indonesian Red Cross deployed emergency response teams and advertised bank accounts for donations. Its head of disaster management, Arifin Hadi, said five water trucks have been sent into the quake area. Aid, including hygiene kits, tarpaulins, jerry cans, blankets and family assistance kits, is being distributed, with more to be sent from Jakarta, he said. The International Organization for Migration said it sent an assessment team to Aceh.

No tsunami risk

Seaside resident Fitri Abidin in Pidie Jaya said she fled with her husband and wailing children to a nearby hill after the quake jolted the family awake. They stayed there for several hours until authorities reassured them there was no tsunami risk. "It terrified me.

I was having difficulty breathing or walking," Abidin said. She said her husband grabbed hold of her and carried her out of the house. The family's house didn't collapse but the homes of some neighbors did and Abidin is afraid three friends were buried in the rubble.

In Pidie Jaya's neighboring district of Bireuen, a teacher at an Islamic school died after being hit by falling debris, said health worker Achmad Taufiq. The world's largest archipelago, Indonesia is prone to earthquakes due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin. The 2004 quake and tsunami killed a total of 230,000 people in a dozen countries, most of them in Aceh. — AP

MERKEL PARTY WANTS BAN ON MUSLIM FULL-FACE VEIL

ESSEN: Chancellor Angela Merkel's party yesterday toughened its stance on immigration and integration, demanding that dual nationality be scrapped for German-born children of foreigners and calling for a partial ban on the Muslim full-face veil. The hardline measures set the party on a collision course with its junior coalition partner Social Democrats (SPD) ahead of elections next year, and underlined the challenges faced by Merkel to rein in the more conservative wing of her party.

Merkel herself had on Tuesday voiced her backing for a prohibition against the niqab or burqa "wherever it is legally possible", before the leadership of her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) voted on the issue yesterday.

The party has also proposed to ease the deportation process for rejected asylum-seekers. But some in her party sought to go further, with the youth wing defying the leadership and winning a vote for a dual nationality rule to be reversed.

Allowing dual nationality was a key demand of the SPD during negotiations with Merkel's conservatives after the last elections in 2013 that resulted in a hard-fought deal on teaming up in a left-right government.

The move mainly affects Turkish migrants, many of whom had come to Germany in the 1960s and 1970s to work but have stayed on and started families here. Before 2014, their children had to give up either their parents' citizenship or their German one by the age of 23. European Union citizens are already permitted to hold both German

citizenship and that of their country of origin. Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere warned during a heated debate on the dual nationality motion that it would be wrong to tear up a compromise with its governing partner. "We don't want to reverse that," he said, adding that it was also a blow for children of foreign origin at a time when the country is struggling with integration issues.

No other party would back such a motion, warned de Maiziere, whose separate proposal for jihadists to be stripped of their German nationalities was also approved by the congress. But party delegates voted narrowly, with 319 votes in favor and 300 against, to scrap the compromise. The decision quickly drew a rebuke from the SPD, with Justice Minister Heiko Maas saying that reversing the rule "would be a step backwards for integration".

SPD vice-chair Aydan Ozoguz accused the CDU of attacking "an important integration success". Given the lack of backing for it from other parties, the measure is unlikely to be ever implemented. Likewise, the call for a partial ban on the burqa is unlikely to become law as it would run into a constitutional legal tangle. But they send a potent signal ahead of the general elections expected next September as the party seeks to win back supporters clawed away by the populist and anti-migrant AfD.

In that spirit, the CDU on Wednesday also called for migrants who are due to be deported to be taken into custody a few weeks before their departure rather than a few days ahead. — AFP

JOIN US FOR THE 3RD YEAR OF MARINA MARKET AT MARINA CRESCENT

for 10 days of family filled fun unique businesses and great food!

Location: Marina crescent
Date: December 1st to December 10th 2016
 Timings Thursday – Saturday: 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM
 Timings Sunday – Wednesday: 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM
Follow us on Instagram! @THEMARINAMALL