

INDONESIA

Nation recalls tsunami horror

Twelve years later, 400 bodies have not been identified in Thailand

By AGENCIES
in Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Thousands of Indonesians prayed for their loved ones on Monday to mark a tsunami which devastated Aceh province 12 years ago today, one of the worst natural disasters in human history.

Some 168,000 lives were lost in the country when a magnitude-9.1 quake struck Aceh, a province in the northern tip of Sumatra Island, bringing about massive waves that also hit coastal areas as far away as Somalia.

“I came here every year to pray for my children, daughter-in-law, and their three children,” Maryam, who goes by one name, said at the Ulee Lheue mass grave, where 14,800 people were buried. The bodies of her family were never found but 65-year-old Maryam, who survived by holding on to a tree trunk, was certain her family were buried in the mass grave as they lived in the vicinity at the time.

Flowers scattered
Graves across the province, including in Siron in Aceh Besar district where more than 46,000 were buried, were crowded with people who scattered flowers on the earth where they believe the remains of their loved ones lie to rest.

Survivors then gathered at a mass prayer in Ulee Lheue mosque, one of the few sea-front mosques still standing in the region after the tsunami.

“The main reason to commemorate the earthquake and tsunami disaster was not to open old wounds,” acting Aceh governor Soedarmo told the mosque attendance.

Indonesia sits on the Pacific “Ring of Fire”, where the meeting of continental plates causes strong seismic activity, and is frequently hit by earthquakes.

The tsunami commemoration comes just weeks after a strong magnitude-6.5 shallow quake struck inland in Pidie Jaya, a district in Aceh, killing more than 100 people, leveling hundreds of buildings and displacing nearly 84,000 people.

In Thailand, at least 400 victims of the 2004 tsunami that killed 220,000 people remain unidentified in Thailand 12 years on, police said on Monday.

The magnitude-9.1 earthquake triggered a tsunami across the Indian Ocean in one of the biggest natural disasters in history.

Thailand, Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka were among the worst hit countries. About 5,400 people were killed in Thailand, among them about 2,000 foreign tourists.

“Since the 2004 tsunami, authorities have contacted between 4,000 to 5,000 relatives to come and receive bodies. There are about 400 bodies that we cannot identify,” said Anand Boonkerkaew, deputy superintendent of Takua Pa district police in Phang Nga province.

CHILE



A damaged road is seen after a quake at Tarahuin, Chile, on Sunday. ALVARO VIDAL / REUTERS

21,000 homes lose power after quake

By REUTERS in Santiago

A major magnitude-7.6 earthquake jolted southern Chile on Sunday, prompting thousands to evacuate coastal areas, but no fatalities or major damage were reported in the tourism and salmon farming region.

Chile's National Emergency Office, or ONEMI, lifted both the evacuation order and a tsunami watch three hours after the Christmas Day quake struck, telling nearly 5,000 people who had evacuated they could return to their homes.

Onemi said one bridge in the area was impassable as crews worked to restore electricity to 21,000 homes without power.

Officials had issued a tsunami warning earlier for areas within 1,000 kilometers of the epicenter, just 40 km southwest of Puerto Quellon, off the coast. But the warning was downgraded to a tsunami

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Denisse Alvarado,
Quellon resident

watch. Eight mostly small ports in the area were closed, Chile's Navy said.

The quake was felt on the other side of the Andes mountains in Argentina, in the southwestern city of Bariloche, but structural damage in areas close to the epicenter was limited, witnesses said. The quake's depth was

about 35 km, the US Geological Survey said.

“There was a lot, a lot of movement here, but besides that nothing of note, there weren't houses falling,” said Alamiro Vera, owner of the Cabanas Hotel in the southern Chile fishing town of Quellon. “It was just scary, and some things inside fell.”

The quake disrupted Christmas plans for thousands of people who fled their homes on foot, in cars and on horseback, seeking higher ground amid torrential rains as sirens warned about the potential tsunami.

Quellon resident Denisse Alvarado was preparing to travel to the countryside to celebrate Christmas with friends when she felt the quake and ran out of her home.

“All of a sudden it shook and shook and shook,” Alvarado, 46, said. “I thought the house would fall and the ground would open because it was

very strong and very loud.” “It was the biggest scare of our lives,” she said.

Salmon zone

The area hit by Sunday's quake was south of Valdivia, where 1,655 people died in a 1960 quake ranked by the USGS as the most powerful recorded in Chile.

The region is home to several industrial salmon farms. An official with Chile's National Fish and Aquaculture Service said several companies had evacuated employees and were evaluating their facilities for possible damage.

Chile is the world's leading copper producer, but there are no major mines located near the zone affected by the earthquake.

Chile has a long history of deadly quakes, including a magnitude-8.8 quake in 2010 off the south-central coast, which also triggered a tsunami that devastated coastal towns.

Zhanjiang special

Giant petrochemical complex being built

By LI WENFANG
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The construction of a 35.42 billion yuan (\$5.1 billion) Sino-Kuwaiti refinery and petrochemical complex, one of the largest international projects of its kind in China, kicked off in the coastal city of Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, last week.

Located on Donghai Island, the country's fifth-largest island, the project is designed to process 10 million metric tons of crude oil and produce 800,000 tons of ethylene annually in its first phase. Such volumes would generate 60 billion yuan in annual output. The complex is scheduled to go into operation in 2020.

The project launch marks a major step in accelerating the construction of a modern industrial system and promoting economic transformation in Guangdong, said Zhu Xiaodan, provincial governor, at the launch ceremony.

It also serves to help safeguard the stability of the domestic oil market and national energy security, he said.

The project is set to boost the economy of Zhanjiang, which is located in western Guangdong, as the government seeks to lift the economy of less-developed parts of the province to promote more balanced growth.

Zhu encouraged the local government to support the project, create a sound investment climate and attract mid- and downstream petrochemical enterprises to Donghai Island to form an industrial cluster.

The National Development and Reform Commission approved the project in 2011. Since then, China



Hu Chunhua (second right), Guangdong Party chief, Zhu Xiaodan (fifth from left), Guangdong provincial governor, and Wang Yupu (center), chairman of Sinopec Group, visit the construction site of the Sino-Kuwaiti refinery and petrochemical complex in Zhanjiang, one of the largest Sino-foreign projects of its kind in China, last week. LANG SHUCHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Petrochemical Corp (Sinopec Group) has optimized the plans in view of the significant international oil price decline and refining overcapacity, according to the group.

The company is the biggest Chinese investor involved in the project.

Sinopec has planned four “technologically advanced and internationally competitive world-class” refinery and petrochemical bases in Zhenhai, Shanghai, the Maoming-Zhanjiang region and Nanjing to push forward the national industrial upgrade strategy.

The project in Zhanjiang is an important step in implementing supply-side reforms and will serve to enhance the group's global competitiveness, said Wang

Yupu, group chairman of Sinopec.

The complex will mainly produce gasoline that meets the National VI standard, diesel, jet fuel and chemical products, including polyethylene and polypropylene.

The project adopts the most internationally advanced techniques in production control, to be built and managed with internationally competitive energy-saving and emission-cutting standards, according to the group.

Just 500 meters away from the refinery stands Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron & Steel's 50 billion yuan mill.

With its first blast furnace going into operation in September last year and its second this July, the mill

has an annual capacity of 8 million tons of steel products.

The complex mainly supplies steel for automobile and home appliance manufacturing, ship building and oil production, mainly to serve the South China and Southeast Asian markets.

Baosteel Zhanjiang was the first steel company in China to apply the strictest environmental regulations.

Petrochemical and steel plants can share resources, such as coal gas produced during steel manufacturing.

The local government has planned industrial parks for the petrochemical and steel sectors to accommodate mid- and downstream enterprises.

Guangdong Guanbao High-tech's and Zhanjiang Zhongzhi Paper's paper-making plants, involving investments of 7.6 million yuan and 15 billion yuan respectively, are also situated on Donghai Island.

With the first phase of Guanbao's project going into operation in 2014 and construction of Zhongzhi venture starting last year, the island is becoming one of the country's largest high-end paper manufacturing hotspots.

According to the city's development and reform commission, these massive petrochemical, steel and paper-making projects will contribute an annual industrial output of more than 300 billion yuan in five years.

Transport projects see steady progress

By LI WENFANG

Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, saw breakthrough progress last week in various projects to upgrade the city's transport network. The projects are aimed to enable greater regional economic integration.

Preliminary surveys were launched in Wuchuan, a county-level city in the region, at a site that will house the relocated Zhanjiang airport. It is the only airport in western Guangdong.

The site is located 32 kilometers away from Zhanjiang's urban area and 38 km from the urban area of Maoming, another city in western Guangdong.

The airport is designed to handle 4.2 million passengers and 25,000 metric tons of cargo annually. According to Guangdong Airport Management Group, the new airport is scheduled to begin operation in 2019. The current airport served more than 1.2 million passengers last year.

Work also started on the 96.5 km Guangdong section of the railway linking Hepu county in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and Zhanjiang. Rail services on the line are due to start in 2021.

The railway, bringing the travel time between Nanjing, capital of Guangxi, and Zhanjiang down from six hours to two hours, is set to promote the integration of Zhanjiang into the Beibu Bay Economic Rim. The Zhanjiang government has set the goal of becoming a central city in the rim.

Construction of the Zhanjiang section of the expressway between Yulin, Guangxi,

4.2
million

passengers will be able to travel via the Zhanjiang airport each year, which is expected to start service in 2019

25,000
tons

of cargo set to be handled annually at the new airport

96.5
km

of railway is under construction on the Guangdong section of the railway linking Hepu county, Guangxi, and Zhanjiang

and Zhanjiang has also started, significantly reducing driving time between the cities.

Work was also launched on another expressway connecting Zhanjiang's high-speed railway station with the center of the city.

The high-speed railway, linking Zhanjiang and Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong, is expected to open to traffic in 2018, according to the city's development and reform commission.

The relocation of Guangdong Zhanhua Group, a large-scale chemical fertilizer manufacturer, to Donghai Island was also carried out last week. Officials expect the move to generate revenue of 4.2 billion yuan (\$604.6 million) annually after the new site comes into operation in 2018.