

Mangkhut leaves trail of destruction in Hong Kong

The storm, with gusts of more than 230 kilometres per hour (142 mph), sent buildings swaying and water surging into homes and shopping malls in Hong Kong

● **Landslide kills dozens in Philippines**

● **Four more were killed in China's Guangdong**

● **More than 155,000 people remain in evacuation centres in the Philippines**

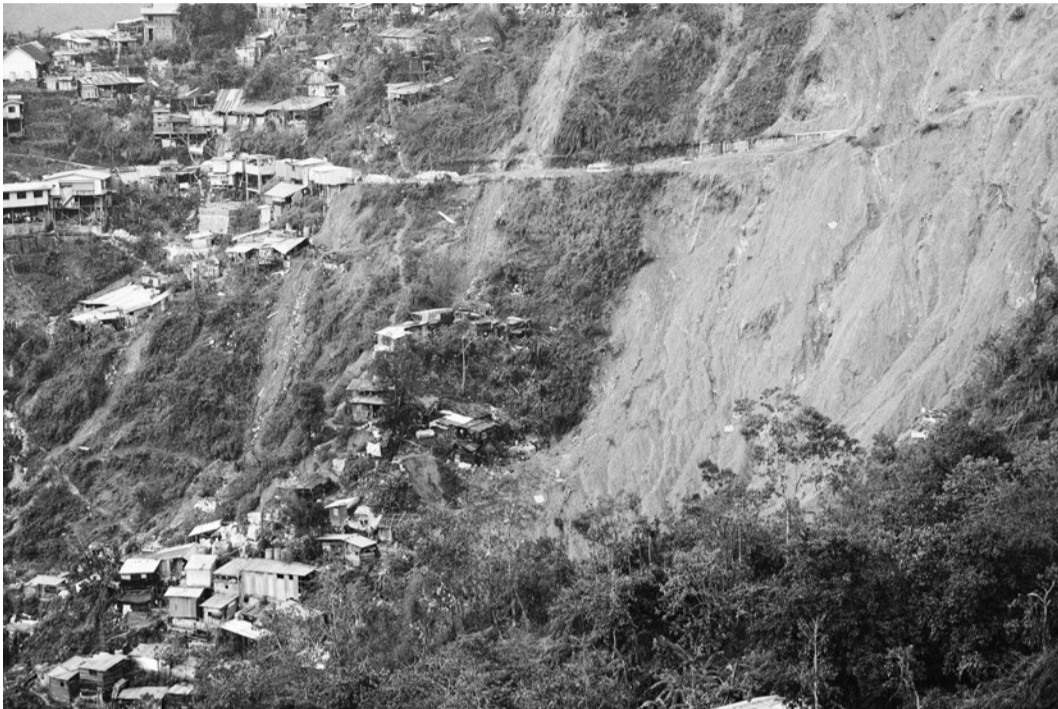
Itoyon, Philippines

Philippine rescuers yesterday searched desperately for dozens feared buried under a landslide unleashed by Typhoon Mangkhut, which also left a trail of destruction in Hong Kong and saw millions evacuated in southern China.

The confirmed death toll across the northern Philippines, where the main island of Luzon was mauled by fierce winds and rain, reached 65 and was expected to rise further given the number of missing.

Four more were killed in China's southern province of Guangdong.

Searchers used shovels and bare hands to dig through mounds of rocky soil in the



A general view shows the landslide site due to heavy rains brought about by Typhoon Mangkhut in Itoyon, Benguet province

northern Philippine mountain town of Itoyon, where 11 bodies have been pulled from the rubble and dozens more may still be trapped after a landslide buried an emergency shelter.

Relatives of the missing were among those taking part in the search for survivors, with little hope they are still alive.

"We believe that those people there, maybe 99 per cent, are already dead," the town's mayor Victorio Palangdan told reporters.

Tearful families surrounded a whiteboard bearing names of the dead and missing as others inspected recovered bodies for signs these could be their loved

ones.

Joan Catted, 42, told AFP her missing cousin Harvey had taken shelter at the bunker.

"He texted his wife not to worry. He said nothing bad will happen to him and that once the rain stops, he will go up. But he hasn't returned until now."

More than 155,000 people

remain in evacuation centres in the Philippines two days after Mangkhut -- the world's most powerful storm this year -- struck, said national police spokesman Benigno Durana.

Across northern Luzon, which produces much of the nation's rice and corn, farms were under muddy floodwater, their crops ruined just a month before harvest.

Hong Kong began a massive clean-up Monday after the typhoon raked the city, shredding trees and bringing damaging floods in a trail of destruction.

The government of the high-rise city described the damage as "severe and extensive" with more than 300 people injured.

The monumental task of cleaning up began as residents, some in suits and ties, struggled to get back to work on roads that remained blocked by felled trees, mud and debris.

Bus services were halted and commuters piled onto platforms trying to board infrequent trains after trees fell on overhead power lines. Schools will remain closed through Tuesday.

Landslides and severe flooding affected some areas, with over 1,500 residents seeking refuge in temporary shelters overnight.

Rubicon group claims Iran embassy attack

Athens, Greece

An anarchist group attacked the Iranian embassy in Athens early Monday, smashing windows and throwing red paint into the courtyard in protest at Tehran's treatment of its Kurdish population, police said.

"The attack was claimed by the Rubicon group," a police official told AFP, adding that no arrests had yet been made.

The attack was carried out by about 10 members of the group at about 0300 GMT who, armed with iron bars, took the guard by surprise and then smashed windows in the waiting room.

Nobody was hurt in the incident, police said.

In a statement on the internet, the Rubicon group claimed the attack as a gesture of solidarity with the "Kurds of Iran".

The Rubicon group has carried out a series of similar attacks in recent years, targeting embassies, companies and public buildings, causing damage but no injuries.

In August, members of the group burst into the Austrian embassy, protesting against Vienna's plans to extend the working day.

US to replace commander in S. Korea

Seoul, South Korea

Washington is set to replace the commander of US forces in South Korea amid a rapid diplomatic thaw on the peninsula, even as denuclearisation of the North stalls.

The US stations 28,500 troops in the South, a treaty ally, to defend it against its nuclear-armed neighbour, which invaded in 1950, triggering the Korean War.

General Robert B. Abrams, commander of the US Army Forces Command, will undergo a confirmation hearing next week to be head of US Forces Korea (USFK), the Senate Armed Services Committee's website showed.

If his nomination is approved, he will succeed General Vincent Brooks as commander of USFK, the UN Command and the South Korea-US Combined Forces Korea, who has been in the post since April 2016.

Protests paralyse Ethiopia capital as violence kills 23

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Demonstrators flooded the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa on Monday, blocking roads and shutting businesses in an explosion of anger following the killing of 23 people on the city's outskirts over the weekend.

The unrest in Ethiopia's largest city was the latest instance of ethnic violence to challenge Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who has undertaken aggressive reforms including reigning in the security forces since his April inauguration.

Police appeared spread thin as groups of mostly young men waving protest flags and tree branches jogged through

neighbourhoods across the city to denounce the weekend killings in the Burayu suburb.

Ethiopia's police chief, Zeynu Jemal, said officers had shot dead five people on Monday, describing them as "dangerous vagrants" who attempted to loot property and steal police weapons.

State-owned Ethiopia News Agency (ENA) said the violence in Burayu was carried out by an organised mob, who looted, killed and forced 886 people out of their homes, citing Alemayehu Ejigu, police commissioner for the Oromia region that surrounds Addis Ababa and includes Burayu.

Local media reported up to 200 arrests.

Over 28pc of Japanese population officially old

Tokyo, Japan

More than 28 per cent of Japan's population is now officially classified as elderly according to government data, the highest rate in the world as the first wave of postwar baby boomers enter old age.

Those aged 65 or older now make up a record 35.6 million, or 28.1pc of the total population, the government said Sunday.

The proportion is the highest by far in the world, ahead of 23.3pc in Italy, 21.9pc in Portugal and 21.7pc in Germany,



Those aged 65 or older now make up a record 35.6 million

according to UN data for those countries.

The government also said those aged 70 or older accounted for 20.7pc of the population, surpassing 20pc for the first time.

The figures show the nation's postwar baby boomers are now entering old age, it said.

The demographic shift is due to a combination of a low birth-rate and long life expectancy.

Japan's rapidly greying population poses a major headache for policymakers who are faced with trying to ensure an ever-dwindling pool of workers can pay for the growing number of pensioners.

Sri Lanka president tells diplomats: pick up phone or pack up

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's president yesterday justified his decision to sack six diplomats -- including an ambassador -- for not answering his phone calls, saying more would follow if the foreign service did not shape up.

Maithripala Sirisena was criticised for the shock dismissal last week of his top envoy to Austria and five other Vienna-based staff after his office tried unsuccessfully

for hours to reach them by phone.

"I am being attacked ferociously over social media for recalling the entire embassy staff. Yes, I did that to send a powerful message to other embassies," Sirisena told a public meeting in Colombo.

He said he ordered the sacking of ambassador Priyaneer Wijesekera and five other staff to set an example.

Sirisena did not say why he



Representative picture (Courtesy of Getty images)

needed to contact the embassy urgently, or why other avenues were not explored to reach the staffers.

The Sri Lankan embassy in Austria is accredited to UN bodies in Vienna, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

It was the second time in days that Sirisena has raised eyebrows.

Last week, he flew into a rage

over nuts served aboard SriLankan Airlines, the island's national carrier, saying they were unfit for animals.

"Returning from Kathmandu, I was served some cashews on board a SriLankan flight, but it was so bad even a dog wouldn't eat it," he said.

An airline spokesman said it had cleared its stock of cashews -- only served in business class -- and would change its Dubai-based supplier.