

Around the World

Big earthquake kills two in Chile and hits mining

SANTIAGO (Reuters)— A powerful earthquake hit mineral-rich northern Chile on Wednesday, killing at least two people, injuring more than 100 and halting output at some of the world's largest copper mines.

Japan PM has full plate but empty hands for U.S.

TOKYO (Reuters)—Warm handshakes and smiles for the cameras will be in evidence when U.S. and Japanese leaders meet on Friday for the first time since Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda took office, but the brief summit stands little chance of resolving the security headaches bedeviling the alliance.

Economic turmoil puts oil rally on shaky ground

NEW YORK (Reuters)—The threat of an economic slowdown in the United States has placed oil's record rally toward \$100 a barrel on shaky ground, raising the specter of a potential steep sell-off in the coming months.

U.S. says not worried about Pakistan nuclear weapons

WASHINGTON (Reuters)— While the United States is reviewing all aid to Pakistan, which has received about \$10 billion in U.S. funding since 2001, the Pentagon has been careful to say the Defense Department does not want to "punish" Pakistan for Musharraf's declaration of emergency rule.

French workers strike against Sarkozy's reforms

PARIS (Reuters)—Strikes by French transport and energy workers caused widespread disruption for the second time in a month on Wednesday in a protest over pensions that is the biggest test yet of President Nicolas Sarkozy's reform drive.

China says key pollution levels nudge down

BEIJING (Reuters)—Two key measures of pollution in China have fallen in what the country's environmental regulator claimed was a victory for its clean-up.

Sri Lanka fighting kills 15 rebels and a soldier

COLOMBO (Reuters)—Sri Lankan troops killed 15 Tamil Tiger rebels in clashes in the north of the island, the military said on Thursday. Fighting between military and LTTE has claimed 5,000 lives since 2006.

Oil spill spells disaster

Officials' negligence chokes 30,000 birds in the Black Sea

AYESHA ALEEM

The recent oil spill, that poured over 5,55,000 gallons of fuel oil in to the Black Sea, has been termed as "one of the worst on record". With over 30,000 birds feared dead, it is a cataclysmic loss for the planet. Precious irreplaceable wildlife has been wiped out causing a massive environmental disaster and a serious ecological imbalance. While the weather in the form of a violent storm has been cited as the reason for the spill, the real cause remains official negligence that allowed the oil transport ships to ply even through they were using outdated and inadequate equipment. And the havoc that the storm wreaked pales in comparison to the damage that the oil spill caused. The additional threat of losing the Black Sea itself

is also being faced. It is appalling that a catastrophe of this nature should be faced due to such a

such a grave loss has been faced.

Corruption, negligence and red tapism have long plagued

world. As various attempts are made to eliminate or at least reduce their impact, the problems continues to rage through several matters in their path, bulldozing them to dust. While there may always be factors out of our control, and those of which no one could be blamed for, it is unacceptable for such 'accidents' to occur simply because those responsible couldn't be bothered with the matter.

Russian environmentalists say that it may take several years to clean up the mess from the oil spill, the problem being aggravated by the oil that is quickly sinking to the seabed. Russian prosecutors are to now conduct a probe into this oil spill. But it may already be too late as several feathered creatures have already met an oily grave.



Oil spills turn into ecological and economic disasters by not only wasting precious fuel but also harming marine life

-Pic courtesy Google images

disposal systems around the

dismal cause, as a result of which

administration systems around the

Pic(k) of the week



Little girls wait for water at a community tap. Despite the planning and implementing of so many schemes, water supply still does not reach homes in rural areas. Resident still have to fill vessels with water from a central source and carry them back to their homes everyday.

- Pic by Supriya Khandekar

Bhutto: House arrested and harassed

ADITI SONI

Remember how we were told as children that it's better to face our fears rather than run away from them? Well, not all of us were raised in the same diet of such quixotic, yet meaningful, words of wisdom. For the second time in less than a week, Benazir Bhutto, former Pakistan prime minister, has been put under house arrest. This is to prevent her from walking 185 miles in protest against the Musharraf-imposed emergency rule.

The consequence of this decision was that it has worsened the ongoing political crisis. In addition, it has clouded the prospect of forming a pro US alliance between Bhutto and President Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Bhutto's demand is to lift the emergency and for Musharraf to step down as head of the military as soon as possible. " They are depriving us of our fundamental right to protest against authoritarian rule and hold a long

march for the revival of democracy," Yusuf Raza Gilani, a former speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly told reporters as he was led away along with other protestors. Asked to comment on Bhutto's house arrest ahead of Tuesday's protest, National Security Council spokesman Gordon Johndroe said: "While the situation continues to evolve, we believe that peaceful protests should be permitted and those detained should be allowed to participate."

It's time to take heed, to take it as a sign if disapproval is ringing in from so many quarters. It's time to be an adult and face the adversity rather than brush it under the carpet and try and keep it suppressed. Because that's something we were taught as children. And all of us know about a problem controlled under pressure. It only turns into a ticking time bomb, drawing closer to the moment at which it will explode and spell doom.

Chavez' outburst causes problems between Venezuela and Spain

AMITESHWAR SINGH

Latin American, Portuguese, Spanish and Andorran leaders were meeting in a 22-nation summit in Chile. Yet the summit was not receiving much media attention - neither at home nor anywhere else. That was until Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez opened his mouth and said something that has blown into a controversy.

The president called former Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, who was a staunch ally of the US, a 'fascist'. Not only that, when the current prime minister of Spain tried to stand up for the

former PM, President Chavez kept on interrupting him loudly. He pushed it enough that the Spanish King leaned forward and say, "Why don't you shut up?" The next day, President Chavez went on to call the king imprudent and asked whether he knew in advance of the 2002 coup against him.

Labelling a Spanish prime minister a fascist carries a serious undertone in Spain, considering the country's bloody civil war and General Franco's 36-year-long military rule that followed. As such, the Spanish media and the public have all cheered their King's

move of telling Chavez to shut up.

Now, the issue has boiled into a



Hugo Chavez

- Pic courtesy Google images

big controversy between the two countries that had been close allies to each other in the past. Chavez

has gone on to say that political, diplomatic and economic ties with Spain were being closely reviewed. As diplomats of both countries try to find a way around the situation, the heads of states are still accusing the other of disrespecting their institutions.

The situation is nothing new for Chavez as he has always been a fiercely outspoken leader. He has called the US president George W. Bush 'The Devil', and a donkey; called Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice a little girl, and former UK prime minister Tony Blair shameless and immoral.