

Number of missing in Ishikawa more than triples

Coming weeks may see more strong quakes

JESSE JOHNSON
STAFF WRITER

One week since the New Year's Day earthquake rocked Ishikawa Prefecture, the Meteorological Agency on Monday warned of the possibility of powerful quakes continuing to hit the area over the next month, while the number of missing more than tripled.

Authorities said the number of people in the prefecture whose safety had yet to be confirmed had surged from 103 to 323. However, the prefecture was casting a wide net for information on the missing, and so it was possible that some had moved away and could not be contacted but were still safe.

The death toll from the quake also jumped, rising to at least 168, as snow and plummeting temperatures continued to complicate relief efforts. The dead included 70 each in the hard-hit cities of Wajima and Suzu, according to the prefecture.

The magnitude 7.6 earthquake — which registered a 7 on the Japanese seismic intensity scale, the strongest rating — resulted in tsunami waves, felled buildings and triggered

a large-scale fire in Wajima, devastating the Ishikawa's Noto Peninsula.

Scores of aftershocks, including a handful that registered as strong as 5 on the Japanese scale, have continued to hit the region.

Meteorological Agency officials said these quakes were likely to persist for the time being.

"The number of earthquakes has been gradually decreasing overall ... but the number of earthquakes has remained high compared with the 2004 Niigata-Chuetsu earthquake and the 2016 Kumamoto earthquake," agency official Shinya Tsukada told a news conference.

Tsukada said that while the likelihood of earthquakes has passed with the same magnitude as the one on New Year's Day had decreased, "seismic activity is continuing."

"For the next month or so, be on the lookout for earthquakes with a maximum seismic intensity of a strong 5 or higher," he said.

Snowstorms, meanwhile, have made the relief effort harder, though the peak of heavy snowfall has passed for the Noto Peninsula. Still, authorities have warned of plunging temperatures and that snow accumulation could lead to the further collapse of buildings already



People gather around a heater at an evacuation center in the town of Anamizu, Ishikawa Prefecture, on Monday, following the powerful New Year's Day earthquake that hit the area. KYODO

rendered unstable due to the powerful quake and aftershocks.

In the town of Anamizu, seven people were confirmed dead Sunday after a landslide triggered by the quake on New Year's Day destroyed two houses, killing a total of 14 people, NHK reported Monday.

Precipitation — including more than 10 centimeters of snow in some areas — has increased the risk of landslides, another headache for rescuers looking to make their way to more remote areas that were already difficult to reach by vehicle.

More than 3,300 people in 24 districts within towns and cities remained cut off from



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U.S. unlikely to shift Taiwan stance: former de facto envoy

GABRIEL DOMINGUEZ
STAFF WRITER

Washington's stance and policies on Taiwan are unlikely to change significantly regardless of who wins the island's presidential and legislative elections on Saturday, a former director of the United States' de facto embassy in Taiwan has told The Japan Times.

Douglas H. Paal, who headed the American Institute of Taiwan (AIT) from 2002 to 2006, said in an interview that, regardless of whether the ruling Democratic People's Party (DPP), the main opposition Kuomintang (KMT) or the "middle-ground" Taiwan People's Party (TPP) win the vote, any differences in Washington's reaction would be "nuanced," and rather involve "adjustments in degree than in type."

"Overall, support for Taiwan runs deep in both major U.S. parties, and I doubt that will change very much," said Paal, who is currently a distinguished fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

A key reason why little or no U.S. policy changes are expected, said the expert, is that Beijing has made itself so "unattractive" that Taiwanese party leaders across the political spectrum will only have "limited bandwidth" to change the policies pursued by outgoing President Tsai Ing-wen, who will step down after eight years because of term limits.

The U.S. has repeatedly said it seeks to work closely with whoever wins the vote, the outcome of which is expected to also have profound implications for Sino-U.S. relations as the two superpowers vie for influence over the strategically located island.

Polls indicate that the election is mainly a three-way race, with front-runner and current Vice President Lai Ching-te of the ruling DPP seeking to make his party the first in Taiwanese history to win three consecutive presidential votes.



Douglas Paal
COURTESY OF DOUGLAS PAAL

Xi's solution for China's economy risks triggering new trade war

BLOOMBERG

As China's property sector declines, leader Xi Jinping needs to reshape the nation's economic model to drive growth over the next decade. His government's solution risks igniting a new wave of trade tensions across the globe.

China's leaders are pouring money into manufacturing as property-related activity, which once spurred about a fifth of the economy's expansion, turned into a drag on growth in 2022. Part of that focus is what they call the "new three" growth drivers of

electric vehicles, batteries and renewable energy, aiding the world's decarbonization push and fueling demand for commodities such as copper and lithium.

So far, the strategy is helping China avoid the recessions that hit Japan in the 1990s and the United States in 2008 when their housing markets melted down: The world's second-biggest economy is now growing at about 5% a year. Yet it's also fueling imbalances that are setting the stage for renewed global trade tensions between China and the developed world, as well as emerging economies that

are pushing to reach the lower rungs of the industrialization ladder.

The U.S. and European Union have recently stepped up warnings on China's overcapacity. Europe initiated a series of trade investigations, leading China last week to launch an anti-dumping probe into EU liquor products such as brandy — a move analysts saw as targeted at France, the main backer of the bloc's action on Chinese electric vehicle subsidies. U.S. President Joe Biden has also tightened measures to deny China advanced technology, and a presi-

dential race this year likely to feature Donald Trump could see protectionist policies ramp up even further.

Developing countries are also impacted. While China's strategy can lower the cost of capital goods, its efforts to retain lower-end industries narrows the space for nations such as Vietnam and Indonesia that would otherwise benefit from China's move up the value chain. Other countries seeking to attract more sophisticated industries, including Turkey and India, are increasing protectionism aimed at China.

Xi's manufacturing focus is driven by a mix of economic, security and social stability objectives. Chinese policy advisers and government-linked economists say that includes a desire to avoid problems such as widening income inequality and rising populism that emerged in the U.S. after it lost manufacturing jobs to China. The U.S. curbs on high-end chips have also prompted China to redouble efforts to attain self-sufficiency in cutting-edge technology as an urgent national security priority.

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Miyazaki's latest fantasy wins Golden Globe

LOS ANGELES
KYODO

Renowned Japanese anime giant Hayao Miyazaki won the best animated film award at the U.S. Golden Globes competition on Sunday, marking his comeback as the winner of a major international contest.

The 124-minute fantasy "The Boy and the Heron" marked the first time a film by a Japanese director has won the award in the category that was created in 2007.

Toshio Suzuki, producer of Studio Ghibli, Miyazaki's production company, said the win "feels exceptional" and expressed hope that it will provide "bright news" amid unfortunate events in Japan since the start of the year.

Miyazaki, an Oscar-winning animator, announced his retirement in 2013 after producing "The Wind Rises" but began making the full-length film in 2017.

Written and directed by 83-year-old Miyazaki, the latest film is also the first original anime in history to top the North American box office after its release in December, according to U.S. media.

The film follows a fictitious Japanese boy,



A cinema employee checks a display poster (right) for Hayao Miyazaki's latest film, "The Boy and the Heron," on its premiere in Tokyo on July 14. AFP-JIJI

Mahito, during World War II. After Mahito's mother dies he moves to a new town where he meets a talking heron that takes him to a magical tower where he enters a fantasy world.

The Golden Globes win makes the Miyazaki movie a leading candidate for the best animated feature film prize at the U.S. Academy Awards in March.

The film beat out other animated features such as "Suzume," directed by Japanese director Makoto Shinkai, "The Super Mario

Bros. Movie" and "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse."

The Golden Globe award is one of many accolades in Miyazaki's long career in animated filmmaking. He was awarded the Golden Bear, the top prize at the Berlin International Film Festival, in 2002 and an Oscar the following year for "Spirited Away."

In 2014, Miyazaki became the second Japanese film director to receive an Honorary Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, following Akira Kurosawa.

The Golden Globe for best drama film went to Christopher Nolan's "Oppenheimer," which depicts the life of physicist Robert Oppenheimer, known as the "father of the atomic bomb."

While the three-hour biopic proved a smash hit in the United States, online memes combining its promotional imagery with that of the comedy "Barbie," which appeared to mock the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, caused a backlash in Japan.

The bombings of the Japanese cities in August 1945 caused an estimated 210,000 deaths by the end of that year. "Oppenheimer" will be released in Japan this year.

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