

The fight for survival in the Philippines

Reports of looting and fighting have increased fear and panic among survivors of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines

With rumours of escaped prisoners and armed rebels, police have begun patrolling the streets. Troops have been deployed in a bid to maintain law and order. But frustration has boiled over into anger as essential supplies fail to reach those in need. At Tacloban airport there are not enough flights to cope with the exodus from the stricken city. Special forces often have to hold back the hundreds of people, many of whom have walked for hours to reach the airport with little or no food. None of the aid being loaded on the runway is being distributed to the needy crowds nearby.

The international relief effort has picked up but it is facing major distribution difficulties, as Philippines Red Cross Chairman Richard J. Gordon explained, "Red Cross volunteers in Manila, the capital of the Philippines, have been preparing aid bundles to be sent to parts of the country devastated by Typhoon Haiyan. Hundreds of thousands of people have been left homeless, struggling to find shelter, water and food."

Soade Messoudi of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said that preparations were made, but the storm surpassed all expectations, "I'm sure that this time, the authorities and other organisations have been better prepared than last year because



Volunteers sort out disaster relief supplies inside the Department of Social Welfare and Development

they went through the experience of the Typhoon Bopha last year. So people have been evacuated well in advance."

"Unfortunately, the strength of the typhoon was such that it has damaged everything. It's bigger than people could have ever imagined. And this has caused a lot of lost lives, lots of people missing, and the

devastation that we are seeing today," Messoudi continued.

The extensive destruction in the central Philippines — with roads gone, power out and communications down — has made it very difficult for aid agencies to get help to people in some of the hardest-hit places.

While international relief ef-

orts have picked up, many petrol station owners whose businesses were spared have refused to reopen, leaving little fuel for trucks needed to move supplies and medical teams around the devastated areas nearly a week after Typhoon Haiyan struck. The city government remains paralysed, with just 70 workers compared to 2,500 normally, he added.

'Pink Star' diamond smashes world record price at auction

One of the world's rarest diamonds has fetched a record price at auction. The 'Pink Star' diamond was sold for 68 million Swiss francs in Geneva. That is the equivalent of over 60 million Euros.



The previous record for a diamond sold at auction was 34 million Euros. The flawless 'Pink Star' was purchased by an anonymous buyer. David Bennett of Sotheby's was the man who conducted the sale. "Of all the gemstones known, coloured — the rare pinks and blues and greens and so forth — are amongst the rarest of all stones and they are finally, I think, reaching the level as it were where the price is matching the rarity," he said.

EU youth unemployment crisis — the human cost

Tepid economic growth in the European Union and people working longer as pension ages are raised means 5.6 million under the age of twenty five are without work in the region

And it is getting worse, in the last four years the overall employment rates for young people declined three times as much as for over twenty fives. In Greece and Spain the youth jobless rate is not far off 60 percent, according to the latest statistics. In the wider European Union, the figure is 23.5 percent. At the other end of the scale just 7.7 percent of young Germans are without a job.

Youth organisations and trade unions told the Paris meeting's host — President Hollande — more needs to be spent on the problem. "We are calling for a more social Europe that addresses its responsibilities in terms of social matters and employment, not only in terms of budget cutting," said Thiébaud Weber, President of the European Trade Union Confederation Youth Committee.



July's jobs summit in Berlin proposed spending six billion Euros over the next two years.

The European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions estimates the cost to the EU in benefits paid out and lost output is over 150 billion Euros a year from having so many young people not in work or education or training.

French President Francois Hollande hosted 24 European leaders for a summit to tackle youth un-

employment across the EU which stands at 23.5 percent. It is a follow up to a jobs summit which took place in Berlin in July.

Addressing delegates, Hollande said, "If there are three words to remember after this summit they are: speed because the need to act is urgent, solidarity because we cannot abandon a whole generation and finally security because we have to propose jobs and training with real prospects for young people."

Alitalia mulls job cuts as part of its new rescue plan

Alitalia is making a last ditch effort to cut costs and raise money to stave off bankruptcy

The board of the Italian airline is reportedly looking at a rescue plan that includes up to 2,000 layoffs and pay cuts. It has met recently to approve the new business plan. It is hoping to persuade investors to put another 300 million Euros into the company to keep it flying. Air France-KLM is not likely to stump up more cash. It holds a 25 percent stake in Alitalia, but considers those shares are now worthless. It has said it would invest more only under 'very strict conditions'.

Experts say Alitalia needs a strong partner willing to invest billions to shift its focus to the more lucrative long-distance market from domestic and regional routes. The Italian government, which sees Alitalia as a strategic asset, has been holding out the prospect that another partner could be found — perhaps from Asia — to keep the airline flying if Air France-KLM walks away. Potential candidates Etihad Airways, Lufthansa and Aeroflot have all distanced themselves for now.

South Korea says 'no' to some Japanese seafood

Sales of seafood have plummeted in South Korea with consumers fearing its contamination following the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan

Crippled by the March 11th, 2011 earthquake and tsunami, the Fukushima plant has had a series of problems in recent months, including radioactive water leaks from storage tanks. The Noryangjin fish wholesale market in Seoul is one of the largest fish markets in South Korea. But, despite scores of banners promising buyers that the fish is safe, sales are dwindling. Some stalls have even had to close down.

Stall owner, Kim Byung-guk expressed concern for the state of fish sales, "In general, South Korean people's distrust in Japanese fishery products is very serious. Because of that, even the sale of safe domestic products is being damaged." In an attempt to boost sales and ease customer fear, local store the Henaro Club has set up a radiation level scanning station next to its seafood section. It allows customers to use a portable device to check the fish for radiation before they buy it. The station is flanked by a large banner stating that the store does not sell Japanese-imported fish products.

The aftermath of the leaks continues to influence the markets, with the public still not convinced about the safety of Japanese fish.