

Powerful quake leaves Greece with only minor damage

A strong earthquake shook Greece and most of the eastern Mediterranean yesterday but caused only minor damages and no casualties.

The quake off the southeastern tip of Greece's Peloponnese peninsula measured 6.9 on the Richter scale, with its epicentre at a depth of 70

km near the island of Kithira. The tremor drove people out of their homes in cities across most of the country.

REUTERS

Asia shivers in record low temperature

Troops and volunteers shovelled snow from roofs and roads in Japan and India's capital New Delhi recorded its lowest temperature in 70 years as a cold wave swept across parts of Asia yesterday.

In China, cattle have died of the cold in the far western province of Xinjiang and a 42-km section of the Yellow River has frozen over in eastern Shandong.

At least 20 people have died from exposure, disease and malnutrition in northern Bangladesh over the past three days because of a cold snap there, newspapers said.

In Japan, troops and workers tried to clear snow that had piled up to more than three metres high in some of the worst-hit areas of Niigata prefecture, and to reopen blocked roads in Nagano prefecture, both areas northwest of Tokyo.

At least 63 people have

died and over 1,000 have been injured since the unusually heavy snowfall began last month.

Many of the dead were elderly people who fell from their roofs while trying to clear snow, while others were crushed when their houses collapsed under the weight of the drifts.

China, meanwhile, is in the midst of its coldest winter in 20 years, the China Daily as said. Even in the usually mild province of Guangdong in the south, temperatures dipped as low as 5 C on Friday while some highways have frozen over with 1-3 cm of ice.

In India, the capital yesterday had the coldest morning in 70 years with the temperature falling to around the freezing point, forcing officials to shut schools. More than 100 people have died in northern India since December due to the cold.

REUTERS

Woman dies after shark attack

Up to three sharks may have attacked a woman who has died in hospital in northern Australia after suffering horrific injuries in a mauling off a popular tourist beach, police said yesterday.

Sarah Kate Whitley, 21, from the northern city of Brisbane, was attacked on Saturday while swimming at Amity Point, on North Stradbroke Island in Queensland state. Whitley lost both arms up to the elbow and suffered wounds to the legs and torso.

Beaches near the scene were closed yesterday, with police patrolling on foot and by boat to warn the public, and conducting a helicopter sweep of the area. The beaches were expected to reopen today.

Police said it appeared that the attack was made by up to three bull sharks, a species that has a tendency to hunt in packs.

Whitley was swimming with three friends at the time, but had ventured into deeper water, which was cloudy following storms on Friday night.

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