

Heavy rains in Honduras flood homes

The Associated Press

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — Heavy flooding kept more than 15,000 people from returning Wednesday to homes swamped by three days of storms. At least 110 people have died and 263 are missing, authorities said.

Teams recovered bodies from swollen rivers along the Atlantic coast.

"The casualties are only preliminary because our rescue brigades are still finding bod-

ies in the rivers," said Ramon Santos, a government official who provided the toll.

President Rafael Leonardo Callejas announced preparations a day earlier to declare a state of emergency in an 8,400-square-mile area in the northern Atlantic provinces of Yoro and Colon.

After flying Tuesday over the hardest-hit areas, he said experts were estimating damages would exceed \$60 million.

The Red Cross appealed for international

assistance for thousands who remained sheltered in schools and churches after their homes were destroyed and mudslides cut the main Atlantic coastal highway, cutting off whole towns.

Santos said civil defense officials were worried about 150 isolated hamlets and towns that have gone four days without safe drinking water.

"We fear there could be a surge of epidemics among the victims," he said.

Japanese snow monkeys roaming South Texas area

The Associated Press

FREER — A strange beast appears to be meandering through the rural thicket of Duval County these days strange, at least, to those so used to the usual South Texas trappings such as cactus, mesquite trees and rattlesnakes.

But not so strange to some in nearby La Salle, McMullen and Atascosa counties, where, on occasion, a stray Japanese snow monkey will traverse the brushy ranges in search of food or a possible mate.

"At first I thought it was an owl," an official at a 100,000-acre Duval County ranch once owned by Clinton Manges said of her first encounter with a snow monkey.

"He was just sitting there on a fence post...he was cute," said the woman, who did not want her name used.

When she tried to get closer to take a photograph of the mammal, it fled, she recalled.

It's been two decades since hundreds of the monkeys were brought to Texas from Arashiyama, Japan, as part of an ongoing research project that began in 1954.

The monkeys also were brought to the United States because their habitat began shrinking as Japan's population increased.

Now, about 400 monkeys are being raised on a 180-acre spread just east of Dilley and are studied by college students working on post-graduate degrees, said Frank O'Neill, who, with his wife, Lou Griffin, operates the South Texas Primate Observatory.

O'Neill and his wife are working on moving the operation close to Millett, where about a dozen of the monkeys, recently acquired from a zoo in Columbus, Ohio, are being cared for.

A monkey escape is not unusual, he said, and it is nothing at which to be alarmed.

Spotting one of the furry beasts still is rare, but area game wardens said they've received numerous reports over the years of snow monkey sightings.

Some have been spotted as far as Charlotte, about 30 miles from Dilley; or near Tilden, about 40 miles away. There have been three reported sightings in recent weeks near Freer, about 60 miles from Dilley, T.

"Some people will see them and think they are going crazy," said Larry Griffin, a Cotulla game warden with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

"Some hunters will see 'em, but they're reluctant to say they have because they think they're not supposed to be seeing them around here," Griffin added.

The monkeys, which typically grow to about 4 feet tall and can weigh between 40 and 60 pounds, have managed to find ways outside their loosely secured domain.

Though an electrical wire runs atop an aging fence that encompasses their compound, several monkeys successfully have climbed out of and back in the confines of the ranch, O'Neill said.

Sometimes the monkeys leave to look for fresh food supplies, while others the young males who reach sexual maturity venture out to find females for themselves.

"It doesn't take 'em long to find out there aren't any more of them out there, and they come back," Griffin said.

"Some will be gone for weeks or months and then, all of a sudden, they'll show up," O'Neill added.

Hank Haugen of Freer, another state game warden, said the monkeys are relatively mild-mannered.

"They'll never attack (humans)...but they could be dangerous if you hemmed them up; they could put a real hurtin' on you with those canine teeth," Haugen said.

Haugen said he has been on the lookout for one of the monkeys. He suspects the two sightings in Duval County are of the same monkey.

He predicted the wandering snow monkey eventually will return to the Dilley ranch.

"I'm sure he'll be happy to get back to the research center to get away from the thorns and back to a square meal of bananas," Haugen mused.

Kuwaitis shoot Iraqi policemen

The Associated Press

KUWAIT — Kuwaiti workers shot two Iraqi policemen who tried to abduct them along the demilitarized border zone between the two countries, killing one of the police, a U.N. spokesman said Wednesday.

The shooting occurred Tuesday on the Kuwaiti side of the three-mile-wide strip, said Abdullahif Kabbaj, spokesman for the U.N. Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission.

He said the two policemen were taken to a hospital in the Iraqi port of Basra, about 25 miles north, where one policeman died of chest injuries. The other was wounded in the arm, but the injury was not serious, Kabbaj said.

Kabbaj said the incident began when the Iraqis fired three shots in the air and forced open a vehicle carrying six Kuwaitis. The Kuwaitis, who had been working on a trench being built as defense against Iraq, were being escorted by a U.N. patrol.

Kabbaj said "an exchange of fire" ensued, and the two Iraqis were wounded. The Kuwaitis and the U.N. patrol left the scene "in order not to aggravate the situation," he said.

The state-run Iraqi New Agency, however, claimed that a lone Kuwaiti opened fire first and then "escaped" in a U.N. car.

"This cowardly aggression took place in front of the U.N. observers, who did nothing to stop the aggressor from shooting," the Iraqi agency said in a dispatch monitored in Cyprus.

The agency said the Iraqi Foreign Ministry was lodging a protest with the U.N. observer mission. It identified the killed policeman as Rebbeh Adnan Abdul-Wahed.

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- Larry Griffin, a Cotulla game warden

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White House changes health care plan figures

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A week after energizing critics by saying 40 percent of insured Americans would pay more under the president's health plan, the White House said Thursday the real number is only 30 percent.

White House budget director Leon Panetta said the 40 percent figure only took into account what people would pay in insurance premiums.

The 30 percent number in-

cludes out-of-pocket costs that are likely to decrease for many Americans under President Clinton's plan.

"If we fail to pass this plan, 100 percent of Americans will pay higher premiums, because that's where the health costs are going," Panetta said.

It was more damage control for the White House after critics seized on the 40 percent figure in testimony last week by Health Secretary Donna Shalala.

"There was confusion that was unfortunate," said White House

spokeswoman Marla Romash.

"We wanted to be able to provide the American people with as accurate an analysis as we could. To just talk about premium costs is to miss half the picture," she said.

There are some people carrying policies with high deductibles, such as a \$3,000, who might pay the full amount of the visit's cost every time they see the doctor, Romash said.

Their premiums might be higher under Clinton's plan, but their co-payments for each doctor visit

likely would be much lower, she said.

Senate Finance Chairman Daniel P. Moynihan, D-N.Y., suggested Clinton still has a political problem trying to convince millions they need to pay more.

"I already said that," Moynihan replied when asked about negative fallout.

Last week, he suggested the 40 percent figure might translate into as many as 100 million Americans paying more, but administration officials have said that was a dramatic overestimation.

Wholesale Loose Diamonds

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Pear Shape				Emerald/Princess			
Weight	Color	Clarity	Price	Weight	Color	Clarity	Price
1.32	M	S2	\$7950	1.14	E	VVS2	\$5600
1.05	J/K	I1	2300	0.71	E	S2	2200
1.03	J/K	I1	2300	0.66	E	VVS2	2150
0.73	G	S2/I1	2175				

Oval				Round Diamond			
Weight	Color	Clarity	Price	Weight	Color	Clarity	Price
2.05	J	VVS2	\$9750	9.51	K	I1/I2	\$29,500
1.53	J/K	S2	\$800	1.64	J	S1	\$600
1.25	J	S2	\$1,950	1.23	I1	S2/I1	\$1,450
1.12	E	S1	\$2,850	1.12	D	S2	\$450
0.98	H	VS2	\$1,375	1.03	G	VSI/VVS2	\$330

Marquise Cut			
Weight	Color	Clarity	Price
1.39	H	S2	\$4,950
1.14	H	S2	\$4,590
0.90	F	S2	\$3,250
0.83	D	S2	\$3,900
0.75	C	VSI/VVS2	\$2,750
0.71	F	S2	\$2,080
0.61	F	S1/VS2	\$1,700
0.58	F	S1/S2	\$1,590
0.54	H	S2	\$1,354
0.46	H	S1/S2	\$650
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0.37	C	S2	\$520
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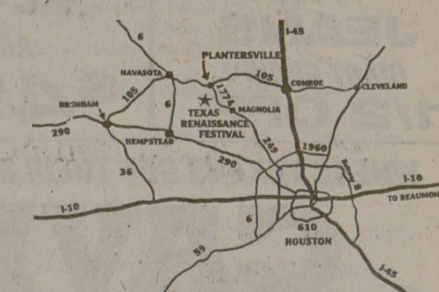
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