

briefly

INDIA Strong quake kills at least two

An Indian army soldier and a child were killed in a strong earthquake which hit the northern Indian state of Sikkim on Sunday evening, said local TV reports.

Meanwhile, some 200 rescuers are heading to Sikkim and its neighboring areas from other parts of India, while the Indian Air Force is sending planes to monitor the situation.

The magnitude-6.9 earthquake struck the region with its epicenter being 68 km northwest of Gangtok, the state capital of Sikkim.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh directed his cabinet secretary to call an emergency meeting of disaster management authorities, according to Press Trust of India.

PAKISTAN Unmanned US drone crashes

An unmanned US drone aircraft crashed in Pakistan's lawless northwestern tribal district on Sunday after suffering a technical fault, local security officials said.

The drone, the second to crash in Pakistan within the last month, went down in South Waziristan, part of the lawless tribal belt on the Afghan border that Washington calls the global headquarters of the al-Qaida terror network. "The American drone crashed in Zangara village of South Waziristan, apparently because of some technical faults," said a security official in Peshawar, the main town in Pakistan's northwest.

XINHUA-AFP

Obama to propose 'Buffett Tax' on US millionaires

By ALISTER BULL
REUTERS

WASHINGTON — US President Barack Obama, in a populist step designed to appeal to voters, will propose a "Buffett Tax" on people making more than \$1 million a year as part of his deficit recommendations to Congress on Monday.

Such a proposal, among suggestions to a congressional supercommittee expected to seek up to \$3 trillion in deficit savings over 10 years, would appeal to his Democratic base ahead of the 2012 election but may not raise much in revenues.

White House Communications Director Dan Pfeiffer said on Saturday the tax would act as "a kind of AMT" (Alternative Minimum Tax) aimed at ensuring millionaires pay a minimum rate of tax that at

least matches that of middle-class families.

The "Buffett Tax" refers to billionaire US investor Warren Buffett, who wrote earlier this year that rich people like him often pay less in tax than those who work for them due to loopholes in the tax code, and can afford to pay more.

Obama is scheduled to lay out his recommendations in White House Rose Garden remarks on Monday and is expected to urge steps to raise tax revenue as well as cuts in government spending.

Those could include reforms of the Medicare and Medicaid government healthcare programs for elderly and poorer Americans. The White House has already said Obama will not recommend any changes to the popular Social Security federal retirement plan.

Obama, who has been ham-

pered in opinion polls over his handling of the faltering economy, wants to use his plan to counter Republican claims he is a "tax-and-spend" liberal as he campaigns for re-election next year.

Congress is at liberty to ignore his suggestions and Republicans, who control the US House of Representatives, have said that they will not agree to tax hikes.

Investor scrutiny

If the president pushes for tax increases that stand little chance of being passed by a divided Congress, it may help him blame lawmakers for thwarting his plans at a time when the public's opinion of Congress has touched record lows.

But he is also under pressure to show leadership after rating agency Standard and

Poor's cut the US AAA credit rating, and as investors scrutinize Washington for evidence it can curb the country's towering deficit and mounting debt.

The supercommittee of six Democratic and six Republican lawmakers must find at least \$1.2 trillion in deficit savings before the end of the year to avoid painful automatic cuts, and is mandated to seek savings of up to \$1.5 trillion.

Those savings are on top of \$917 billion in deficit reduction agreed to in an August deal to raise the US debt limit and Obama wants the supercommittee to go further.

Obama has separately urged the supercommittee to consider \$467 billion in tax increases on top of that goal to pay for a jobs bill he unveiled earlier this month.



TREASURED TEXT

PHOTO BY CARL COURT / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Geoff Pick from the City of London Corporation poses on Saturday with a Magna Carta from 1297 at a media event in London to announce its forthcoming display.

Yemeni president won't quit until successor elected, says aide

SANAA, Yemen — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh will not resign until a presidential election is held to elect a new leader for the country, Saleh's press secretary Ahmed al-Soufi told Xinhua.

"President Saleh is the legitimate leader of Yemen and he will not resign until a new presi-

dent is elected through an early presidential election," al-Soufi said.

"Saleh's decree to authorize his deputy was only about resuming dialogue with the leaders of the opposition coalition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) in order to set a timetable and mechanism to sign

the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative," said al-Soufi in Sanaa.

Saleh, who has been facing eight months of protests demanding an end to his 33-year rule, is still in Saudi Arabia for recovering from injuries after an attack on his palace in early June.

Earlier last week, the embattled president issued a decree authorizing his deputy Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi to sign the GCC initiative after launching a dialogue with the opposition to set a timetable and mechanism to transfer power.

Saleh's move was welcomed by the United States, which said

on Thursday that "there were encouraging signs for the GCC power-transition deal to be accomplished within one week".

However, the opposition insists that Saleh sign the deal before any dialogue is launched.

"The JMP is apparently not willing to sit around the peaceful dialogue table for agreeing

on a mechanism to implement the GCC power-transition deal, because the JMP's strategy was built on the ideas of sabotage and demolition," said al-Soufi, adding that "therefore a proposed dialogue is completely out of the JMP's priorities".

XINHUA

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Global service centers moving to Chengdu

By LI YU

With shared service centers increasingly used by multinational companies to serve a range of their departments, a seminar organized by the Chengdu Tianfu Software Park from Sept 15 to 16 promoted the benefits offered by the southwestern city.

Most Fortune Global 500 companies today have various forms of such centers to serve various departments.

In Europe, 50 percent of multinational companies have or are establishing shared centers.

In the past decade, China has become the new focus for offshore shared services. But decision-makers are increasingly faced with challenges in the nation's coastal first-tier cities — the rising cost of labor and land, as well as intensified competition for talent.

As a result, inland cities are moving into the field. They offer abundant human resources, appealing policies and a good industrial and living environment.

More than 100 managers — including those from GE, Henkel, APL, Yum!, Wilmar, Maersk, Lafarge and Bayer — joined experts and representatives from the industry in

Chengdu to discuss the latest trends, prospects and challenges in shared services.

They visited Chengdu Tianfu Software Park to explore the reasons Fortune Global 500 companies are increasingly moving their service centers to southwestern China.

A survey by Ernst & Young in April showed there were more than 450 shared service centers in China in the financial, manufacturing, services, telecommunications and transport industries.

The number of foreign-invested shared service centers accounts for 47 percent of the total.

During the two-day meeting, Hackett Group Vice-President Tom Bangemann, rated by HRO Today magazine as a "HR superstar" for three consecutive years, hosted a training session on organizational structures and management, site selection, performance management and expanding the scale of shared service centers.

In addition to Bangemann's talk, managers from APL, Henkel, Lafarge, Corning, ZTE and Nordic International Management Institute made presentations about global knowledge and local experience, revealing insights into the development

of shared service centers.

Advantages

When the Chinese government released a plan for the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Zone in June, development in the region entered a new stage.

Chengdu ranks No 1 of the world's fastest growing cities in the next decade, according to a research report made by Forbes magazine, and the top destination for US investment, said the US Chamber of Commerce.

It has now attracted more than 200 Fortune 500 companies.

In July, Chengdu was rated among the world's 15 best emerging business cities by Fortune magazine.

Human resources play a large role in the ratings.

Chengdu offers high-quality human resources as a result of its 51 universities and colleges that have graduated more than 2.2 million professionals and skilled workers.

As well, the city's quality of life attracts talent from other places.

Each year, it can provide 160,000 university graduates and 100,000 professionals and technical workers.

The city's per capita labor

cost is about 30 percent lower than coastal cities.

A report on employee happiness by human resource company Kelly Services and online job site Zhaopin.com in April said that along with Beijing and Shanghai, Chengdu is one of the three Chinese cities that people are most unwilling to leave.

During the seminar, participants visited the rising hub for China's shared services centers — Chengdu Tianfu Software Park — where they visited operations by ANZ Bank, DHL, Damco and Huawei to find out why finance, communications and logistics giants have set up shared service centers in Chengdu.

Success stories

- ANZ: ANZ Bank has a history of 175 years, has operations in more than 32 countries worldwide and provides banking and financial products and services to more than eight million customers.

- Its Chengdu operations center was established in March and is the company's third following Bangalore and Manila. The center mainly provides call center services and background business operations to support the development of ANZ Bank in China and Asia.

- DHL: Headquartered in Germany, DHL is the world's largest express delivery and logistics service. It provides services in 220 countries worldwide and has 300,000 employees.

- In 2009, DHL set up its Chengdu shared services center to provide financial, accounting, human resource management and customer services. Today, DHL has 700



PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The 2011 China Shared Service Organization Seminar was held in Chengdu Tianfu Software Park.



The Chengdu Tianfu Software Park is a national-level software industry base in China.

employees in Chengdu.

- Damco: An international logistics company that integrates the world's largest container shipping company Maersk Logistics and Damco Logistics, Damco transports 2.5 million con-

tainers and 60,000 tons of air cargo each year.

- Its service center was established in March 2010 to provide supply chain management for the group and external customers. It now has 1,100 employees in Chengdu.

- Huawei: A leading telecommunications equipment maker, Huawei moved its national financial shared services center from Shenzhen to Chengdu in 2009.

- The center now employs 400 professionals.



Chengdu Tianfu Software Park is growing as more companies move inland for lower costs.