

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

Late Edition

New York: Today, mostly sunny, gusty winds, high 30. Tonight, clear, cold, low 20. Tomorrow, some sun, lighter winds, high 35. Yesterday, high 33, low 25. Weather map appears on Page B7.

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NEW YORK, MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2004

ONE DOLLAR



Dimitar Dilkov/Agence France-Presse—Getty Images
Viktor A. Yushchenko flashing a victory sign in Kiev early today.

PRO-WEST LEADER APPEARS TO WIN UKRAINE ELECTION

A THIRD ROUND OF VOTING

Yushchenko, a Survivor of Fraud and Poisoning, Takes the Lead

By C. J. CHIVERS

KIEV, Ukraine, Monday, Dec. 27 — Viktor A. Yushchenko, the opposition leader, appeared headed for a resounding victory early Monday in a riveting presidential race marked by intrigue, charges of poisoning, fervent street demonstrations and widespread abuses of state power.

There were no independent reports of the egregious election violations that had discredited the previous round of voting. Mr. Yushchenko, addressing supporters at his headquarters, predicted an end at last to an extended and bitter election season.

"It has happened," said Mr. Yushchenko, his face still disfigured from dioxin poisoning this fall for which he has blamed his adversaries in the government. "Today we are turning a page of lies, censorship and violence." Ahead, he said, lay a "new epoch of a new great democracy."

With 74 percent of the votes from the Sunday election counted, Mr. Yushchenko was leading Prime Minister Viktor F. Yanukovich by 55 percent to 40 percent, according to the Central Election Commission. The early results placed him within the range predicted by surveys of voters exiting the polls, which gave the opposition a 15- to 20-point lead.

Displays of fireworks lighted up Independence Square, where tens of thousands of Mr. Yushchenko's supporters turned out once more, as they had for more than two weeks in late November and early December to protest the government fraud that discredited the last vote. The Orange Revolution, as Mr. Yushchenko's supporters have taken to calling their peaceful resistance, appeared to be nearing its end.

The election was the second head-to-head contest between Mr. Yushchenko and Mr. Yanukovich, who once had been the handpicked successor to departing President Leonid D. Kuchma, but had publicly broken with Mr. Kuchma and cast himself as an embittered outsider.

A first round of voting in October had narrowed a large field to these two finalists, and the second round of voting, on Nov. 21, which gave the victory to Mr. Yanukovich, was overturned by Ukraine's Supreme Court

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Airlines' Woes May Be Worse In Coming Year

By MICHELINE MAYNARD

Passengers who got caught up in the airlines' troubles over Christmas received a glimpse of what may await them in the coming year.

The winter storms and computer malfunctions, which snarled airport traffic from Philadelphia to Atlanta, may have been unavoidable, experts say. But the signs of labor unrest that cropped up over the weekend could be a harbinger of things to come in an industry already buffeted by bankruptcies and structural change.

With the six big airlines expected to lose another \$5.5 billion this year, every one of them — American, United, Delta, Continental, Northwest and US Airways — has announced plans for deeper cuts in 2005. All told, they will reach \$7.5 billion in spending and at least 20,000 jobs.

"We really have the tough part ahead of us," said Gerald A. Grinstein, the chief executive at Delta Air Lines, which avoided a bankruptcy filing this fall by persuading pilots to cut their pay by a third.

For passengers, the irreversible retrenchment by the airline industry, which has shrunk by a quarter since the start of the decade, has meant the loss of food service, a reduction in routes, flight delays, lost baggage and other headaches.

But if employees' reactions to these kinds of changes are anything like what US Airways experienced over the weekend, consumers are in for more serious disruptions.

Yesterday, US Airways, which is operating in bankruptcy, canceled 29

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Autism Therapies Still a Mystery, But Parents Take a Leap of Faith

By BENEDICT CAREY

Desperate parents of autistic children have tried almost everything — hormone injections, exotic diets, faith healing — in the hope of finding a cure.

But more than 60 years after it was first identified, autism remains mystifying and stubbornly difficult to treat. About the only thing parents, doctors and policy makers agree on is that the best chance for autistic children to develop social and language skills is to enroll them in some type of intensive behavioral therapy.

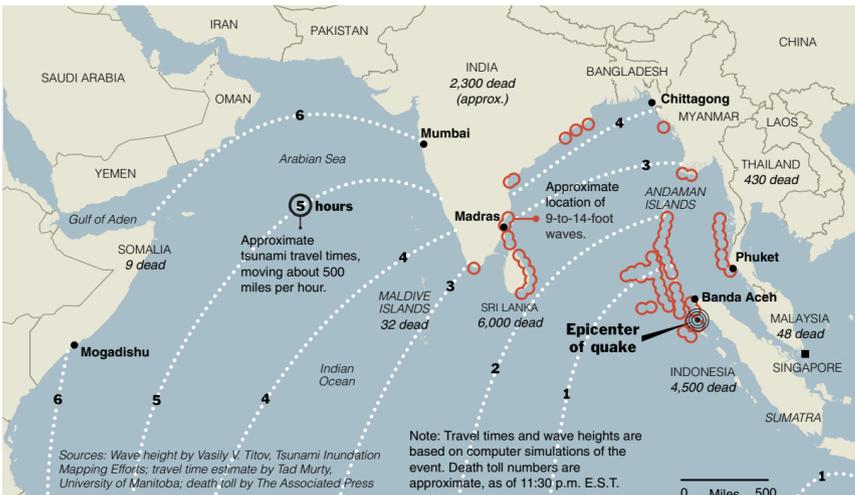
A government-appointed panel has endorsed such therapies, which can cost \$40,000 to more than \$60,000 per year. Parents fight to get their children placed in behavioral programs, encouraged by the claims of some therapists that they can produce astonishing improvement in up to 50 percent of cases. An estimated 141,000 children with autism receive special education services, in many cases including behavioral therapies, through public schools.

Yet the science behind behavioral treatments is modest at best. Researchers have published very few rigorously controlled studies of the therapies, and the results of those studies have been mixed. While some children thrive, even joining regular classrooms, the studies have found that most show moderate or little improvement. And researchers say most parents now experiment with so many alternative treatments — including vitamins, diets, sensory therapies and computer games — that they muddy the results of behavior treatment, making it very hard to say what is causing a child to gain skills or to decline.

The most recent analysis of treatment research, financed by the National Institutes of Health and scheduled to be published next year, concludes that although behavior treatments benefit many children, there is no evidence that any particular treatment leads to recovery. Doctors do not yet know how to predict which

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Thousands Die as Quake-Spawned Waves Crash Onto Coastlines Across Southern Asia



SRI LANKA A woman wept after the tsunami destroyed her house in a coastal area in Colombo, the capital.



INDIA The powerful waves battered houses and cars at Marina Beach in Madras, on the eastern coast.



THAILAND A street littered with vehicles and other debris near Patong Beach in Phuket, on the western coast.

Disaster Sneaks In and a Village Is Pummeled

By SETH MYDANS

DEHIWALA, Sri Lanka, Monday, Dec. 27 — Disaster crept up on them deceptively, the villagers said, then pounced.

"We were just relaxing here after finishing our morning work," said J. W. Kanti, whose work consists of cooking, washing and caring for her children. "All of a sudden the water from the sea rose up close to our houses. Then it went out again. We all stood and watched."

It withdrew for 1,000 yards, said Christopher Fernando, 30, an electrician, scraping the seabed dry behind it.

"The stones looked like elephants!" said his neighbor Emil Chandrase.

The people who lost everything here in Sri Lanka in Sunday's earthquake were among the country's poorest, mostly subsistence fish-

men who lived between the rocky shoreline and the railroad tracks.

Officials say as many as 4,500 people are known to have died in Sri Lanka, one of the most severely hit nations, and that perhaps 500,000 are homeless. The death toll is certain to rise as more people are determined to be missing from seaside villages like this one.

No one died here in Dehiwala, a village south of the capital, Colombo, but hundreds have been left homeless, including 600 people who are taking refuge on the brightly lit grounds of a Buddhist temple.

Mr. Fernando said the fishermen rushed to secure their boats, in vain. "Then all of a sudden, after a few minutes, the water came back again in a huge wall and we ran, and all our houses were turned into junk."

A huge wind rose for a moment, whipping the four palm trees that stand near his house. "We just grabbed our kids and ran," he said. "That's all we managed to save."

One of those taking refuge at the temple was Aslin Gomus, 58, whose voice was hoarse from shouting.

"The water came, and I started screaming," she said. "I screamed and screamed. I saved a lot of children." But when she was asked, many hours later, she said she had no idea what she had been shouting.

Her niece Kumari Mendis, 29, said she took up the cry, "The water is coming!"

"We were so scared," Ms. Mendis said. "I thought maybe we will die now. We were just running. Thank God nobody is dead. But everything is gone. Everything is nothing."

Before they told their tales, they seemed to be bundles of rags lying

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Untold Numbers Are Missing in 6 Countries

By AMY WALDMAN

MADRAS, India, Monday, Dec. 27 — The world's most powerful earthquake in 40 years erupted underwater off the Indonesian island of Sumatra on Sunday and sent walls of water barreling thousands of miles, killing more than 13,000 people in half a dozen countries across South and Southeast Asia, with thousands more missing or unreachable.

The earthquake, which measured 9.0 in magnitude, set off tsunamis that built up speeds of as much as 500 miles per hour, then crashed into coastal areas of Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Indonesia, the Maldives and Malaysia as 40-foot-high walls of water, devouring everything and everyone in their paths.

Its force was felt more than 3,000 miles away in Somalia on the eastern coast of Africa, where nine people were reported killed.

Aid agencies were rushing staff and equipment to the region, warning that rotting bodies were threatening health and water supplies.

It took several hours in some cases on Sunday for the waves to build and reach their targets after the earthquake struck. But none of the most affected countries had warning systems in place to detect the coming onslaught and alert their citizens to move away from the coastline.

"I just couldn't believe what was happening before my eyes," Boree Carlsson, 45, of Sweden, told Reuters from a hotel in the Thai resort of Phuket. "As I was standing there, a car actually floated into the lobby and overturned because the current was so strong."

A tsunami — the term is Japanese — is a series of waves generated by underwater seismic disturbances, in this case the interface of the India and Burma tectonic plates. Seismologists with the United States Geological Survey said the ocean west of Sumatra and the island chains to its north was a hot zone for earthquakes because of a nonstop collision occurring there between the India plate, beneath the Indian Ocean seabed, and the Burma plate under the islands and that part of the continent.

The India plate is moving at about two inches a year to the northeast, creating pressure that releases, sporadically, in seismic activity. But this was an especially devastating earthquake, the fourth most powerful in 100 years.

Television images showed bodies floating in muddied waters. Cars went out to sea; boats came onto land. Snorkelers were dragged onto the beach, and sunbathers out to sea, Simon Clark, a photographer who was vacationing on Ngai Island in Thailand, told The Associated Press.

Indonesia reported nearly 4,500 dead, most in the Banda Aceh area of Sumatra, a region that has been the site of a continuing civil war. In Sri Lanka, at least 6,000 were dead. In India, an estimated 2,300 died, with

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More on the Earthquake

CAUGHT WITHOUT WARNING The lack of a tsunami warning system in the Indian Ocean region essentially guaranteed the devastation, even in places where the deadly waves took hours to reach. PAGE A10

SNAPSHOTS OF HORROR The waves' reach spanned thousands of miles, emptying beaches, wiping out families and igniting panic. PAGE A10

THE AID EFFORT Around the world, governments and relief agencies moved quickly to provide aid to stricken areas and to begin planning for long-term recovery efforts. PAGE A10

CHARTING THE DEVASTATION A map showing affected countries and initial estimates of the toll. PAGE A11

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