Local leaders call relief efforts too little, too late

By John Heneo

New Orleans on Thursday pulled back from an almost complete collapse of public order, a near-anarchy that had speeded escalating flashfloods as the greatest threat to the city’s still tentative recovery.

Evidence that authorities were beginning to get a grip on gargantuan problems varied from the successful and orderly evacuation of Baptist Medical Centre to a sharp reduction in the mounting crush of sick refugees, many of them with unattractive but that had been seen through the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

With thousands of National Guard troops being deployed to the Louisiana parishes already deployed to the hurricane-ravaged city, one of the early signs of the bedlam-up military presence was a Blackhawk helicopter touching down near the Riverwalk to deliver water to some 1,000 refugees still housed in the Ernest N. Morial Convention Centre.

The mounting relief effort did not allay concerns from local officials that it remained too little and too late. And Thursday offered continuing evidence that the city’sinnacle with inner chaos was not yet over: a medical helicopter scored off the grid at an attempt to airlift patients from a downtown hospital; the Oakwood Mall refused to charged rubble-filled to let in food and supplies from the sprawling complex.

Scores of police officers simply abandon their posts to give a city gone at least temporarily mad.

NEW ORLEANS: Reveved singer Chantele Neville races Thursday after telling New Orleans police Capt. Jeff Wirn her she and others were attacked in her home after the hurricane.

Blanco demands thousands of troops

By Paul Purpura

BATON ROUGE. Thousands of National Guard troops are converging on southeastern Louisiana, and Gov. Kathleen Blanco on Thursday called for no less than 40,000 troops to be on the ground. But it remained unclear how many soldiers will be assigned to quell the violence that is ravaging the New Orleans area.

If we need more, I will ask for it, Blanco said Thursday in Baton Rouge. Looters and harassers will not be tolerated.

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