

# Hospitals overwhelmed in quake zone

AFP, Yogyakarta

Hundreds of traumatised patients are crammed into every available space at the Pant Rapih Catholic hospital, and the parking lot has become a giant open-air waiting room.

Widiarti, 26, waited alone on a narrow stretcher laid in front of the radiology room, her badly bruised face and arms peeking out from under the dirty cloth used to cover her.

Sastroutomo, an elderly woman, lay on a mat on the floor. She could not speak as her face was swollen and her mouth black with dried blood. A card next to her head read, "Radiology needed".

One nurse said staff at the hospital in the central Indonesian city of Yogyakarta were struggling even to register the hundreds of patients in need of help after Saturday's earthquake which killed over 3,300 people.

"We only take the details of each patient and immediately forward them to the concerned wards," she

said.

Hospitals in the densely-populated city have been overwhelmed by the thousands of people streaming in for treatment.

At the Pant Rapih hospital a steady stream of ambulances arrived through the night and emergency workers unloaded bloodied patients on stretchers.

Six-year-old Tiara Fadillah lay sleeping on a bed, her hip likely broken when she was hit by rubble as her home collapsed around her.

"Because she had protected her younger sister, she was the one hit by the wall," said Tiara's distraught father, 29-year-old Budi Utomo.

"I took my child (to hospital) using a neighbour's car, but she was only treated about four hours later. But we understand, because there are so many people at the hospital," he said.

In the morgue, one list displayed on a makeshift bulletin board showed 50 dead. Bodies covered in white sheets were lined up on three rows of benches.

Heru Nugroho, a spokesman for

the state-run Sardjito hospital in Yogyakarta, told AFP that 1,500 victims were being treated there, many of them in the crowded hallways.

"We need volunteers to help," he said.

Officials at both the Indonesian Red Cross and the European Union's humanitarian aid service ECHO made urgent appeals for surgical teams, medication and blood to be rushed to the quake-hit area, east of Jakarta.

At the Muhammadiyah hospital, hundreds of injured patients were being treated outside, many on pavements.

Back at the Pant Rapih hospital, 71-year-old Harto Prayitno waited on a bed on a packed veranda with his two sons.

"I was still sleeping in my room when the walls and ceilings collapsed on me," he explained.

Although he had been taken to hospital shortly after the quake hit in the early hours of Saturday, he only received the most basic of care -- two splints around his right calf and

some bandaging -- at about noon.

"Nothing has happened since. And I still don't know whether my bone is broken," he said.

A nurse tenderly cleaned the blood from the hand of a young woman, her face covered with a jacket, as a relative held her down on the stretcher laid in a busy hospital hallway.

"We have been working non-stop and, as you can see, there is still a lot to do," he said briefly.

Tafsiah, 52, sat dejectedly on a mat in the open just near the emergency ward's entrance, the left side of her face badly swollen and a bandage wrapped around her right ankle.

"My neighbours bought me here, but they had to leave me to take care of their own family," said the Yogyakarta fruit seller, who was hit by a wooden beam as she tried to crawl out of her home to safety.

"I am waiting for a neighbour to take me home. He had promised to take me home but I have been waiting here for hours."



PHOTO: AFP

Residents salvage valuable things from their collapsed shops at market in Bantul, Yogyakarta province, Central Java yesterday, a day after an earthquake shattered the area. Rescue workers dug desperately through rubble for survivors as weeping relatives buried their dead after a powerful quake in central Indonesia killed at least 4,611 people.

## More quakes show power of Pacific 'Ring of Fire'

AFP, Jakarta

The Pacific's volatile "Ring of Fire" unleashed two more earthquakes yesterday, a day after a temblor in Indonesia left more than 4,300 dead in one of the world's most seismically active regions.

The quakes shook the South Pacific nations of Papua New Guinea and Tonga within 15 minutes of each other on Sunday morning.

Although the quakes were as powerful as that which hit the central Indonesian island of Java, there were no reports of deaths or subsequent tsunamis.

But experts believe the activity in the Earth's crust over the past two days -- including the awakening of the Mount Merapi volcano near the epicentre of Saturday's quake -- has all been linked to the Ring.

"There's no doubt they are effects of the same cause -- the ring of weakness in the Earth's surface," said Gary Gibson, professor of seismology at the RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia.

The Ring, which stretches along the western coast of the Americas, through the island nations of the South Pacific and on through Southeast Asia, is a series of fault lines -- or weaknesses -- in the hardened upper layers of the Earth's surface, known as the crust.

These lines of weakness are the meeting points of huge continental plates that make up the crust and which literally float on the molten rock of the Earth's core.

These plates are in constant motion, clashing into each other or moving away from each other, creating stresses and pressure build-ups at their margins.



PHOTO: AFP

Injured earthquake victims lay on the floor of an overwhelmed hospital on the outskirts of earthquake-hit Yogyakarta yesterday. The death toll from the massive earthquake that rocked Indonesia's main island of Java has risen to 4,611.

## Quake survivors search for food

AP, Bantul

Thousands of survivors dug through their crumpled homes Sunday in search of food and clothing Sunday after a powerful earthquake killed more than 4,600 people in Indonesia's densely populated Java island.

Most of the dead were buried in village graveyards within hours of the disaster Saturday, in line with Islamic tradition. Villagers dug mass graves and village heads recorded the names of the victims so they could be added to the official death toll.

The 6.3-magnitude earthquake struck as many people were sleeping, injuring thousands in the nation's worst disaster since the 2004 tsunami. It also triggered fears that a rumbling volcano nearby would erupt.

The quake badly damaged the world famous 9th century Prambanan temple complex, where scores of stone blocks and carvings lay scattered, an archaeologist said.

The disaster zone stretched across hundreds of square miles of mostly farming communities in Yogyakarta province. The worst devastation was in the rice-farming town of Bantul, where more than 2,400 people were killed and 80 percent of the homes were flattened.

"I have to start my life from zero again," said Poniran, whose 5-year-old daughter Ellie was killed.

Poniran dug up his still-breathing daughter from the rubble of her bedroom, but she died in a hospital awaiting treatment along with hundreds of others.

"Her last words were 'Daddy, Daddy,'" he said.

Tens of thousands of people spent the night Saturday in any open space available streets, cassava fields, even the narrow

paths between rice fields. Power and telephone service was out across much of the region, adding to the terror of aftershocks.

About 450 aftershocks had shaken the region as of midday Sunday, with the strongest measuring magnitude-5.2, said Handi, an official at the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency who uses only one name.

Survivors searched the ruins of their homes on Sunday for anything still usable and complained that they hadn't received any aid.

"We're short of everything clothes, food, water, all are gone. We are poor people, but our lives still matter," said Budi Wiyana, 63, whose house was destroyed.

Doctors struggled to care for the injured, hundreds of whom were lying on plastic sheets, straw mats and even newspapers outside overcrowded hospitals, some hooked to intravenous drips dangling from trees.

Bloodstains littered the floor at Yogyakarta's Dr. Sardjito Hospital, along with piles of soiled bandages and used medical supplies.

"We are short of surgeons," said Alexander, a doctor who goes by one name. "There are still so many critically injured people here."

In several villages, residents told reporters there were no people or bodies still trapped under the rubble of the houses, mostly simple brick and wood structures.

In Peni village on Bantul's outskirts, villagers set up simple clinics to treat injuries, but were hampered by shortages of medicine and equipment. A group of women cooked catfish caught in a nearby pond for dozens of people huddled under a large tent.

## Asian nations lead swift aid for quake victims

AFP, Hong Kong

Asian countries sent medical teams and joined worldwide pledges of aid Sunday as Indonesia reeled from a powerful earthquake that killed some 4,300 people and left 10,000 injured.

As world leaders offered their condolences, neighbouring and other countries dispatched medical teams and supplies to the devastated area while China, the United States and Britain pledged emergency aid.

"The Chinese government has expressed to the Indonesian government its willingness to provide

any assistance needed," China's foreign ministry said after also offering two million dollars.

President George W. Bush offered 2.5 million dollars after talking by telephone with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who advised him of the situation on the ground.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the Indonesian people as they comfort all those affected by this terrible disaster," Bush said.

The European Union said it would release up to three million euros (3.8 million dollars) in emergency aid.

Japan, Malaysia, Singapore,

South Korea and Taiwan have already sent doctors and other medical experts to the stricken area on Indonesia's main Java island. Nations as far afield as Norway and Turkey are also flying in teams.

Despite pledges of aid pouring in, Indonesia appealed for further assistance with the 6.3 magnitude quake devastating areas around the historic city of Yogyakarta and leaving some 200,000 people homeless.

Hospitals are struggling to cope with the number of injured, prompting an emergency appeal from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for almost 10 million dollars.

## Help slow to come

Say quake survivors

AFP, Bantul

Tugio and Marianto, whose tiny hamlet was flattened by the Indonesia quake, are tired and frustrated -- and waiting for help they said was slow to arrive.

"Since yesterday, no district officials have come to check on us," Tugio told AFP, a day after 90 percent of the homes in Plesetan, south of the ancient city of Yogyakarta, had been destroyed.

Marianto added: "We've come here to get food and tents -- we need them badly."

In nearby Jetis, dozens of traumatized survivors were camped in front of the government offices, complaining that no officials had shown up to attend to their needs.

"There is not one single official

here. The subdistrict chief came here yesterday, asked how many people died and then she left," complained Sulastru, a 31-year-old woman left homeless by the quake.

"Help only came from neighbouring families, who provided us with meals," she said.

Indonesian authorities insisted they were ready to handle the aftermath of the quake, the biggest disaster to hit the world's fourth most populous nation since the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono -- who rushed to the scene shortly after the quake -- was on site to oversee relief efforts.

"All operations are now on course," welfare minister Aburizal Bakrie told the ANTV television network, while visiting a makeshift

shelter for the tens of thousands of people displaced by the quake.

Bakrie said the Jakarta government had earmarked 50 billion rupiah (5.5 million dollars) for relief operations, adding that all medical costs for quake victims would be paid by the state.

Presidential spokesman Andi Mallarangeng said Yudhoyono would stay in the area for several days to ensure that local, provincial and national authorities worked together with the army to mobilize all necessary resources.

Vice President Yusuf Kalla said some 5,000 troops would be deployed by late Sunday to assist with relief efforts. Hundreds of them arrived early in the day in Bantul district to begin delivering aid supplies.

## 60 children detained as prisoners at Guantanamo

AFP, London

More than 60 minors, some as young as 14, have been held as prisoners at the US detention facility for suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, a London-based human rights group claimed in a report published yesterday.

Those detainees were under 18 when they were captured by US forces, and at least 10 of them still being held at Guantanamo were 14 or 15 when they were seized, held in solitary confinement, subject to repeated interrogation and allegedly tortured, the charity Reprieve was reported as saying.

Britain's Independent on Sunday (IoS), which carried the allegations, suggested the charges could threaten the United States' relationship with its closest ally in the "war on terror", Britain.

"We would take a very, very dim view if it transpires that there were actually minors there," it quoted a British government official as saying.

Unnamed government sources said the allegations directly contradicted Washington's assurances to London that no minors were held at Guantanamo.

Reprieve's legal director and a lawyer for a number of detainees, Clive Stafford-Smith, told the newspaper the United States could have broken not only its own laws but all human rights conventions by putting children in adult jails.



PHOTO: AFP

Picture taken on May 27 shows Ariane-5 ECA launcher carrying Thai and Mexican telecommunications satellites lifting off from the Kourou base in French Guiana. Ariane 5 ECA rocket, a heavy-duty version of the European Space Agency's (ESA) workhorse Ariane 5 series, which can carry a payload of up to 10 tonnes, lifted off 2109 GMT and placed Mexico's Satmex 6 and Thailand's Thaicom 5 into preliminary orbits.

## Comatose Sharon moved to long-term care clinic

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, comatose since suffering a stroke in January, was moved on Sunday from a Jerusalem hospital to a long-term care clinic near Tel Aviv, a hospital spokesman said.

Israel radio said one of Sharon's sons accompanied the 78-year-old ex-general in an ambulance from Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital to the Chaim Sheba Medical Centre at Tel Hashomer.

A Hadassah spokesman confirmed Sharon had been moved.

Sharon was categorised as being permanently incapacitated last month after suffering a brain haemorrhage on January 4. Chances of recovery for victims of such strokes, caused by bleeding in the brain, are slim.

His deputy, Ehud Olmert, took over as interim leader and formally assumed office this month after his Kadima party won most seats in March elections.

Israeli media said Sharon would be placed in a ward reserved for comatose patients where doctors would try to wean him off his respirator.