



A member of a Taiwanese rescue team uses a sensor to detect any sign of life from rubbles of houses in Yogyakarta yesterday. The death toll from the earthquake that rocked Indonesia's main island of Java on May 27 has risen to 5,100.

# Quake aid trickles in

## Indonesia declares emergency as toll reaches 5,100

AFP, Bantul

Indonesia struggled to cope with the scale of the earthquake disaster yesterday, with aid trickling in for thousands of injured and homeless survivors who faced a difficult third night in the open. As the death toll from Saturday's quake passed 5,100, foreign rescue teams and international aid workers fanned out across the quake zone in central Java, distributing much-needed food, water, tents and tarpaulins. But ongoing power cuts hampered rescue work, and fresh rains as night fell spelled more misery for some 200,000 people made homeless by the disaster. Some of them expressed anger that help was not reaching them more quickly. "The government does not have any willingness to help," said

Hariyanti, a housewife living in a village near the city of Yogyakarta. On the roads to Bantul, the district hardest-hit by the 6.3-magnitude quake, and to Yogyakarta, desperate people clutched signs reading "please give aid" and held out buckets to collect money from passers-by. Another sign read "Where is the pemko?" or local government. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who visited quake survivors on Monday, acknowledged aid was slow to arrive. "We have to manage this well. I ask the local governments to be more diligent and more active," he said. His government declared a three-month state of emergency in the zone, where wooden beams from collapsed houses stuck up like toothpicks, and broken ceiling tiles and bricks littered the ground.

Survivors -- too terrified to return home as hundreds of aftershocks rattled the region -- hung out washing on lines strung between trees, or spread what little clothing they had left on blue tarpaulins they used for shelter. Adding to their fear, Mount Merapi -- a volcano north of the quake's epicentre -- became increasingly active Monday, belching clouds of hot gas and ash as lava trails ran down its slopes. Vice President Yusuf Kalla said the government had allocated 75 billion rupiah (eight million dollars) for emergency aid. And the relief effort got a much-needed boost as Yogyakarta's damaged airport was reopened, allowing humanitarian aid flights to arrive. More international rescuers landed in the devastated region, including a

20-strong search and rescue team from Taiwan and an 87-member Malaysian rescue team, which headed out of Bantul in a convoy. "I heard there are no more bodies trapped in the rubble," team commander Ahmad Zailani told AFP, explaining that his team hoped to help survivors or clear some of the rubble. Hospitals overwhelmed with five times their normal patient load begged for more medical staff and supplies to treat the thousands of injured who overflowed from their wards, raising fears of the spread of disease. "Waste management in the hospitals is now critical. There is human waste everywhere. The situation is quite serious," said Unicef spokesman John Budd.

# 20 dead in East Timor violence

AFP, Dili

At least 20 people have died since violence erupted in Dili last week but the body count has halted since international peacekeeping forces tightened their grip on the East Timor capital, hospital officials said yesterday. The director of central Dili's Guido Valadares Hospital, Antonio Caleres, said 20 people had died since the violence flared on May 23. Most of the deaths occurred in two incidents -- one involving nine police and army officers shot outside the justice ministry Thursday, the other an arson attack on a suburban home early Saturday that killed five women and a child. Caleres said there had been no deaths since Saturday, a day after the first Australian troops landed in the strife-torn nation. An international force including Australian, New Zealand, Malaysian and Portuguese personnel is in the process of restoring order to the country.

# Tigers agree to Oslo talks

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka Monday banked on the European Union to ban the Tamil Tigers even as the rebels said they would agree to more talks to shore up the implementation of a fragile ceasefire. The rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) face the "terrorist" label across the 25-member European Union bloc following a meeting of ministers in Brussels later Monday, European diplomats said. The threat of a ban as well as possible condemnation at a meeting of aid donors to Sri Lanka in Tokyo this week has put intense pressure on the rebels to mediate to help halt a surge in violence which has claimed about 600 lives since December. A ban could lead to a crackdown on

fundraising for the Tigers, who are accused by human rights organisations of extorting money from Tamils living abroad. Ahead of the EU meeting, a pro-rebel website reported that the group's political leader had accepted an invitation by peace broker Norway to attend a two-day meeting on June 8 to discuss the role of ceasefire monitors. "Our leadership has accepted Norway's invitation to attend the talks in Oslo," Nitharsanam.com quoted leader S.P. Thamilselvan as saying. However, the website said the guerrillas needed assurances on the logistics of travelling to Norway. "Although we accepted the invitation, transport arrangements and safety of LTTE members attending the talks has not been finalised as yet,"

Thamilselvan said. "The Norwegian facilitators have taken the full responsibility of making such arrangements." Norway, however, has indicated that an EU ban on the Tigers would complicate their work. And the rebels have warned they could be forced to resume their war for an independent homeland if they are outlawed in Europe where they raise large amounts of cash. Tamils comprise 12.5 percent of the population in a country where Sinhalese are the majority. The LTTE was set up by a school drop-out in 1972 and what was a rag-tag handful of men carrying locally made pistols has grown to be one of the world's most ruthlessly efficient guerrilla outfits.

# Why geography curses Indonesia?

AFP, Hong Kong

The powerful earthquake that hit Indonesia was just the latest display of violent seismic activity on the archipelago, which stretches across one of the most unstable parts of the Earth's surface. The country's position on the planet's crust means it will continue to experience such catastrophes, just as it has done for the past 50 million years or so, according to seismologists. "The problem with Indonesia is that you have an area of intense seismic activity coinciding with a very densely populated part of the world," said Gary Gibson, professor of seismology at the RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia. "It means there will always be some terrible loss to earthquakes in Indonesia." The plates of the planet's crust that float on the molten core of the Earth smash against each other constantly, but while those plates usually move only a little bit each year, those that meet at Indonesia move more quickly. "These are probably the most active plates in the world -- one is moving at around seven centimetres (nearly three inches) a year," said Mark Leonard, seismologist at Geoscience Australia. "That's incredibly fast and as a result it produces a lot of energy that has to be dissipated somehow," Leonard said. "And that is usually through earthquakes."



A police post in the centre of the city burns during a demonstration in Kabul yesterday. Gunfire broke out in the centre of the Afghan capital as hundreds of people took to the streets after at least seven civilians were shot dead by US troops.

# US pushes for global sanctions on Iran

REUTERS, Washington

The United States is pushing Europe and Japan to use broad sanctions to financially pressure Iran's leadership if diplomacy fails to resolve an international dispute over Iran's nuclear activities, the Washington Post reported in its yesterday editions. The newspaper said the plan would target every Iranian official the Bush administration sees as linked to nuclear enrichment as well as terrorism, government corruption, suppression of reli-

gious or democratic freedom and violence in Iraq, Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian territories. It would restrict the Tehran government's access to foreign currency and global markets, shut its overseas accounts and freeze assets held in Europe and Asia, the newspaper reported, citing internal government memos and interviews with three US officials. The plan was developed by a Treasury Department task force that reports directly to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the Washington

Post said. Consideration of global economic sanctions follows decades of unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States against Iran. The United Nations is demanding that Iran halt enrichment activities that the West says are a cover for developing weapons. Iran says it only wants to make fuel for nuclear power. Internal US assessments suggest sanctions would not impact Iran without hurting some US allies, the Washington Post said.

# Nepali MPs welcome truce code of conduct

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's parliament yesterday welcomed a code of conduct for a ceasefire with Maoist rebels, saying it would help prevent a return to violence that has killed more than 12,500 in the last decade. The two sides have observed a ceasefire for nearly a month since King Gyanendra was forced to relinquish absolute power and reinstate parliament in April after weeks of mass pro-democracy protests. The interim government led by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala

introduced the code for legislative debate although it was not subject to a formal vote. Members of parliament said they hoped the Maoists will follow the plan. "The agreement reached in the code of conduct is a welcome move and now the Maoists must end all forms of violence as they have entered into the process of mainstream politics," Ramchandra Poudel, a member of parliament and general secretary of the Nepali Congress Party said in parliament Monday afternoon.

# 12 killed in Afghan riots

## US-led airstrike kills 50 Taliban

AFP, AP, Kabul/Kandahar

At least 12 people were killed in the Afghan capital Kabul Monday in an accident involving the US-led coalition and rioting across the city that followed, according to witnesses and the president's office. Five people were killed in the early morning accident in the north of the city, the president's office said in a statement. An angry mob gathered at the scene of the accident and started throwing stones at the soldiers. An AFP photographer saw coalition troops open fire

on the mob, leaving at the least four people dead. The coalition has said its soldiers may have fired above the hostile crowd but has not admitted to any deaths. Afghan police also opened fire as the protest snowballed, witnesses said. The incident sparked rioting across the capital with about 1,000 protesters moving through the centre of the city towards the diplomatic area. One eyewitness told AFP he had seen Afghan soldiers shoot dead two rioters trying to break through a police cordon and move into an area that includes the presidential palace and

United Nations offices. Meanwhile, US-led coalition aircraft bombed Taliban militants meeting in a remote region of southern Afghanistan yesterday, killing dozens of fighters in the latest violence to wrack the volatile region, an Afghan official said. More than 50 militants were believed to have been killed in the airstrike on Kajaki district in Helmand province, although police had yet to reach the mountainous location to confirm the casualties, said provincial deputy governor, Amir Mohammed Akhonzada.

# China, India to sign accord to boost ties

AFP, Beijing

China and India are scheduled to sign an agreement to expand military cooperation during Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee's visit this week, the Indian embassy said yesterday. Mukherjee, who arrived in Beijing Sunday, will oversee the signing of the accord, which the Indian defence ministry had said would institutionalise training, exercises and other contacts between the two countries' armed forces. "During the visit, the two sides are expected to sign a memorandum of understanding on exchanges and

cooperation in the field of defence," the Indian embassy said in a statement issued Monday. The agreement will aim to develop "a strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity between India and China," and at enhancing trust between the two militaries, the Indian defence ministry said ahead of Mukherjee's visit. Mukherjee is scheduled to hold meetings with his Chinese counterpart, Cao Gangchuan, and Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing Monday, the China Daily newspaper reported. He will also call on Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao Tuesday.



Sri Lankan children hold up banners during a protest calling for an end to conflict on the island in the capital Colombo yesterday. Sri Lanka was banking on the European Union to ban Tamil Tiger rebels, but analysts and officials warned that proscription was unlikely to save a collapsing ceasefire at home.