

ASEAN SUMMIT

Hillary faces Japan-China wrangle

BBC ONLINE

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has joined the Asean regional summit, amid a continuing war of words between China and Japan over disputed islands.

An apparently friendly China-Japan meeting ahead of the Hanoi summit on Friday was followed by Beijing accusing Tokyo of damaging bilateral relations. The US has urged dialogue but China has already expressed dissatisfaction with Hillary over the issue. Hillary's agenda will also include human rights issues.

The 16-nation East Asia Summit has now formally opened in the Vietnamese capital.

The China-Japan row is over islands known in Japan as Senkaku and in China as Diaoyu. They are controlled by Japan but claimed by China.

Ahead of her arrival, Washington called on the nations to "have a thoughtful, considered dialogue and resolve these issues".

State department spokesman PJ Crowley said: "We recognise that there is an open question of sovereignty, and we expect that to be resolved between Japan and China through dialogue."

But China has already said it is "strongly dissatisfied" with Hillary for speaking out on the dispute after meeting her Japanese counterpart Seiji Maehara in Hawaii on Thursday.

She said the islands fell within the scope of Japan's security alliance with the US.

Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Hu Zhengyue said on Friday: "The Japanese side should take responsibility for ruining the atmosphere for leaders of the two countries."



US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton (L) talks with Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard on the sidelines of the 17th summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Hanoi yesterday.

Scores found alive in Indonesia tsunami zone

AFP, South Pagai

Scores of people feared dead in Indonesia's tsunami disaster zone were found alive as rescue workers spread out to remote island communities five days after the killer wave.

The discovery came as Indonesia struggled with disaster on two fronts following another powerful eruption of the archipelago's most active volcano, which spread chaos and ash over a vast area of central Java.

Indonesia's Mount Merapi burst into life again as a loud explosion sent frightened locals

scurrying to safety and sprayed ash over a wide area.

Police, soldiers and locals took to the roads in panic as the volcano erupted violently, sparking fears of a repeat of the deadly explosions earlier this week that are now known to have claimed at least 36 lives. No one was killed in the eruption on Saturday, but hospital staff reported two people had died in the chaotic evacuation.

On the tsunami-hit Mentawai island chain off the coast of Sumatra, rescue workers battling rough seas and monsoon rain found 135 peo-

ple hiding on high ground, too scared of another wave to return to their shattered villages.

"We're so grateful that we've found many of the missing people -- we'd been working very hard to find them," disaster management official Joskamati said.

Officials had held little hope of finding many of the missing after flights over the area earlier in the week revealed dozens of unclaimed bodies strewn across beaches and wedged in rubble.

Many of the dead were also believed to have been sucked

out to sea as the killer wave receded.

The number of missing was almost halved from 298 to 163 following Saturday's discovery, while the death count remained at 413, according to an official tally.

Rescue workers were reaching some of the isolated coastal villages crushed by the three-metre (10-foot) wall of water which was triggered on Monday by a 7.7-magnitude earthquake, but monsoon weather was slowing the relief effort.

"Before help came I survived by eating whatever we could find, such as taro," said Theopilus, 42, a farmer on the worst-hit island of South Pagai.

"We're in dire need of more food, tents and blankets. I feel really cold at night as it rains all the time."

In central Java, 1,300 kilometres (810 miles) to the southeast, terrified residents fled in panic when Mount Merapi erupted again just after midnight, fearing a repeat of explosions on Tuesday that claimed at least 36 lives.

No one was killed in the latest eruption, but hospital staff reported that two people had died in the chaotic rush to escape.

"I was sleeping on the veranda when loud booms like thunder woke me up," local resident Kris Budianto, 51, told AFP. He suffered a broken arm and facial wounds when he crashed his motorbike in the melee.



Three-week-old tsunami survivor Indonesian baby is attended by a nurse at a hospital in Sikakap in North Pagai island, one of the Mentawai islands yesterday. The unidentified baby boy was found by rescuers bruised and covered with sand in a water drainage on October 26, 2010 in Munte Barubaru village a day after a massive tsunami.

Iran ready for N-talks after Nov 10

REUTERS, Brussels

Iran is ready to hold its first talks with world powers in more than a year about its disputed nuclear program any time after November 10, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said Friday.

The meeting with a group of six world powers would be the first in the long-running dispute since October 2009 and also the first since the United Nations, the United States and European Union imposed tougher sanctions on Iran this year.

Western officials say the punitive measures are increasingly damaging the economy of the world No. 5 oil producer and that this may persuade it to agree to curb sensitive atomic activity.

Iran has dismissed the impact of sanctions and shown no sign of backing down over a uranium enrichment drive. It says it has a sovereign right to pursue peaceful nuclear power, but the West suspects it aims to build unlawful atomic bombs.

Palin, US State dept in Twitter duel

AFP, Washington

A tongue-in-cheek US birthday message to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad over Twitter may not have reached the intended recipient, but triggered a rebuke from someone else -- Sarah Palin.

State Department spokesman Philip Crowley, learning from reporters that Ahmadinejad celebrated turned 54 on Thursday, took to the micro-blogging service to ask him to release two US hikers detained in Iran since last year.

"Happy birthday President Ahmadinejad. Celebrate by sending Josh Fattal and Shane Bauer home. What a gift that would be," Crowley tweeted.

"Your 54th year was full of lost opportunities. Hope in your 55th year you will open Iran to a

different relationship with the world," read another tweet.

Palin, the Republican Party's 2008 candidate for vice president who enjoys a following among conservatives, was not amused.

"Happy B'day Ahmadinejad wish sent by US Govt. Mind boggling foreign policy: kowtow (and) coddle enemies; snub allies. Obama Doctrine is nonsense," she wrote in her own message on Twitter.

Palin highlighted Ahmadinejad's past calls for the destruction of Israel.

Crowley defended himself on Friday.

"My tweet was simply to suggest that a reasonable celebration of President Ahmadinejad's birthday would be to release Shane Bauer and Josh Fattal," Crowley told reporters.

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Suffering from abnormal heart rhythms? Seek treatment now



Arrhythmia or abnormal heart rhythm is a common reason for sudden cardiac death (death due to an abrupt and unexpected loss of heart function). Doctors at the National Heart Centre Singapore, who treat more than 100,000 patients for various heart problems each year, explain the symptoms and latest treatment alternatives.

Symptoms include:

- Heart palpitations
- A pounding sensation in the chest
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- There may also be no symptoms, in which case, they are normally picked up in a routine medical examination.

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Pacemakers send electrical signals to make the heart beat properly. Implanted under the skin, they are used to correct slow heart rates and are sometimes used after ablation.

Automatic implantable cardioverter defibrillators are used to recognise life-threatening ventricular arrhythmias and restoring a normal heart rhythm by giving it an electric shock.

Ablation alters or removes heart tissue causing the arrhythmia. It is done through a catheter or surgery.

Maze surgery is done by making multiple incisions to allow the electrical impulses to move effectively.

For information on arrhythmias and other heart conditions, please go to www.healthxchange.com.sg/heart

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