

Japan's death toll rises

KOBE, Japan—Hundreds of thousands of people jammed the main road out of Kobe today, some limping and in bandages as they picked their way past collapsed buildings and piles of rubble that were homes and stores before a catastrophic earthquake struck. The death toll topped 3,000.

Thousands who stayed behind huddled around campfires and caught water from broken pipes, too terrified to go into their homes.

Many phone lines in the western port city were still down, and friends and family struggled to find each other. People left notes tacked to what was left of their homes, telling each other where they had taken shelter.

The earthquake early Tuesday triggered hundreds of fires, and many of them burned through the day and night. By today, the wind-whipped fires had burned out.

White smoke rose from the rubble and charred structures poked up along miles of streets that had been reduced to a giant gray-and-brown patch.

Throughout Kobe, leaking gas hissed from ruptured pipes, raising the threat of explosions.

The devastation, hundreds of aftershocks and lack of basic services sent hundreds of thousands of people fleeing, many to the shelter of family and friends.

Makoto Hiroiyama was sending his wife, mother and child out of town to stay with relatives.

"It's dangerous here, and there's

no water," he said. "It's no place for my elderly mother and my child."

The death toll from the quake, the worst to strike a Japanese city since 1923, climbed to 3,021, national police said. A teacher from Los Angeles, 24-year-old Voni Lynn Wong, was among the victims.

At least 14,572 people were hurt. A total of 869 people were listed as missing, but hopes faded of finding more victims alive in the rubble.

In the quake zone, life in a high-tech country was suddenly reduced to the most basic and primitive level. Telephone service, power, gas and train service were still largely knocked out.

In Kobe, which had been a thriving, cosmopolitan city of 1.4 million, people crouched around campfires and used water from ruptured pipes.

Hundreds of aftershocks rattled the region. Many people were too terrified to sleep indoors and spent the night in the open, huddled in blankets. More than 120,000 people sought shelter Tuesday night.

In Kobe's Suma district, 70,000 people were evacuated after gas leaked from cracked tanks in a nearby industrial area.

At shelters, people blinked in the sooty daylight, waiting for food. A few wandered through the rubble, poking at the smoking ruins of their former homes.

"I'm helpless. All I can do is sit around the fire like this and wait,"

said a middle-aged man resting at a shelter in an elementary school. "All I have now are water and blankets. But at least I'm alive."

Supplies were short, and only a few stores were open today.

"I've been waiting for more than an hour. I'm trying to get something to drink," one man told Japanese TV as he waited with hundreds of others outside a convenience store.

The government's rescue effort gathered momentum today, a full day after the quake. The military said 2,000 soldiers, including medics and engineers, had arrived in the quake zone. Nearly 50 aircraft, including three dozen helicopters, were ferrying supplies to survivors.

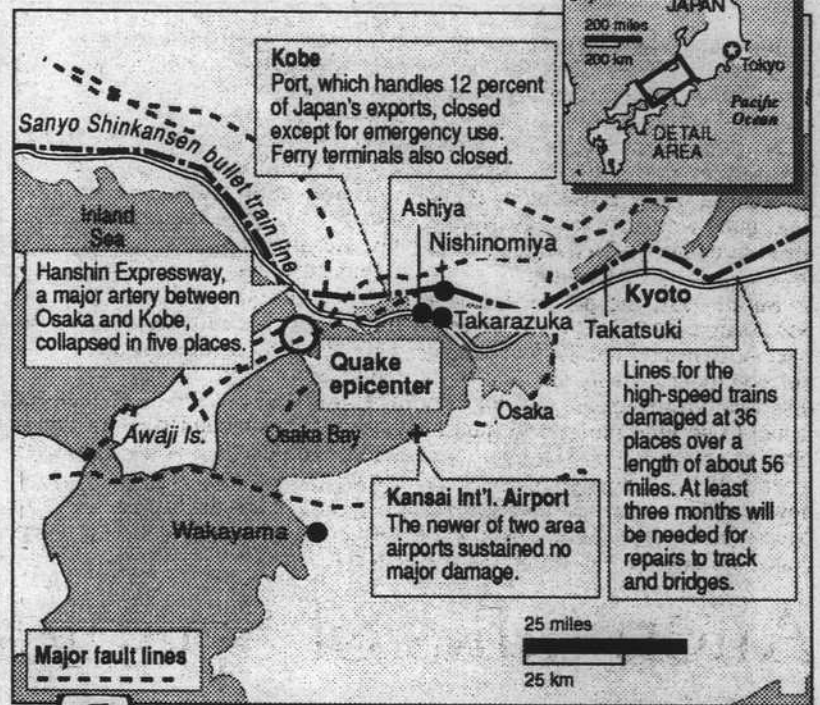
However, there was growing criticism over the slow start in helping the earthquake victims. "Quake Reveals Shortcoming Of Disaster Services," said a headline in the English-language Japan Times.

Kobe residents said lack of preparation compounded the disaster.

"My neighbors and I tried to fight the fire using well water, but it didn't do much," Ken Muroya, a 67-year-old community group leader, told the Asahi newspaper. "I wish Kobe city had been better prepared. ... It's very regrettable."

Despite Japan's highly regarded earthquake-resistant architecture, some of the 10,000 buildings toppled by the quake were modern structures.

Earthquake devastates Kobe, surrounding area



- CASUALTIES:** 3,021 dead and 14,572 injured, according to police. Nearly 900 people were missing.
- CITIES:** Kobe, Takarazuka, Nishinomiya, Ashiya, Awaji Island and Osaka had the most fatalities.
- GAS:** Osaka Gas stopped supplies to 834,000 households in Kobe and part of Ashiya because of fears of damage to gas pipelines.
- BUILDINGS:** Almost 20,000 destroyed or damaged.
- WATER:** Supply to about 60,000 households was suspended.
- ELECTRICITY:** About 916,000 households were blacked out.

Chechen rebels retake Russian gains

GROZNY, Russia — Despite heavy shelling, Chechen fighters were close today to wiping out the Russian gains made since New Year's by recapturing Grozny's train station and moving into the central market.

Russian forces pounded the center of the Chechen capital with artillery fire, rockets and mortars. Sukhoi fighter jets screamed in pairs overhead, rocketing buildings.

But the Chechens had retaken the train station and were fighting for the market, which the Russians used to launch attacks on the presidential palace, symbol of Chechnya's independence drive. The rebels still hold the palace.

There was no sign that Russian peace overtures reduced the fighting for Grozny, and it appeared that only artillery and the air force were helping the Russians hold on.

At a Kremlin meeting today, President Boris Yeltsin ruled out talks with Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

"We do not want to hold direct talks with Dudayev because he carried out genocide against his own people," Yeltsin said.

However, he said the Russian government was prepared to talk to field commanders, clan leaders and representatives of local Chechen governments.

Yeltsin, who has kept a low profile throughout the conflict, said he was in control of events.

"Don't worry, everything will be settled soon on the Chechen issue. I am in strict control of the Russian security structures and know the situation every day," he said.

Thousands of people are believed to have been killed since Moscow sent troops into the mainly Muslim republic in the Caucasus Mountains on Dec. 11.

Chechen fighters were defiant today — convinced they had the Russians on the defensive and that the battle was going their way. They said they had heard of the reported agreement to stop using

heavy artillery but didn't know if it would take effect.

Russian and Chechen negotiators took a step Tuesday toward a cease-fire when Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin met with two Dudayev envoys in Moscow, a day after making a televised peace appeal.

The Chechens said both sides agreed to stop using heavy artillery by tonight as a first step toward a full cease-fire.

But the Russian government continued its anti-Dudayev rhetoric. It said the meeting was brief, at the Chechen side's request and a "last chance" for cooperation.

The Chechen envoy said he would head immediately to Grozny to brief Dudayev, who has been in hiding.

In Washington, Adm. William O. Studeman, acting director of the CIA, said Tuesday that top Russian officials are likely to be fired for their roles in the bungled assault on Chechnya.

GM strike could cripple auto industry

FLINT, Mich. — A strike that could cripple much of the U.S. auto industry within days broke out Wednesday at a General Motors Corp. plant that makes spark plugs, filters and other parts.

Some 6,800 workers at the AC Delco East complex walked out when talks broke off shortly before the 10 a.m. deadline set by the United Auto Workers. The plant also supplies parts to Ford Motor Co. and Chrysler Corp.

The union has complained that understaffing and overtime to meet booming demand for cars are creating dangerous and unhealthy working conditions. In addition, the UAW said outside contractors hired by GM threaten workers' jobs.

Similar complaints led to two GM strikes last year that interrupted the flow of parts and quickly forced other factories to close.

"Most of these guys have been working a lot of overtime," said Al Woodham, a GM autoworker for 31

"Most of these guys have been working a lot of overtime ... They're tired."

AL WOODHAM
GM autoworker for 31 years

years. "They're tired." GM officials refused to discuss the dispute or the effects the strike will have. But automakers' reliance on the just-in-time delivery system for parts makes them vulnerable to any interruption in supplies.

The UAW predicted that other plants in Flint would be affected within a day. Soon after, GM and other companies' plants around the country could feel the pinch.

"Within a week, it will go nationwide," said Jill Miron, chairwoman

of executive board of UAW Local 651.

Chrysler spokesman Alan Miller said he didn't expect Chrysler to be hurt by the strike. Ford spokesman Mike Vaughn said he wasn't sure.

Talks resumed Wednesday afternoon. The union claims that terms of the three-year contract signed in February 1994 are being violated.

Workers picketed outside the plant, and passing cars honked their horns in support.

"Nobody wants to go on strike," Woodham said. "It sounds crazy, but sometimes it's healthy if it gets things moving. But everyone loses money on the deal."

GM officials hoped for a quick settlement.

"We will continue to work ... to reach agreement with as little disruption as possible to our employees and our customers," said George Albrecht, director of human resources for AC Delco.

News... in a Minute

Malcolm X's daughter pleads innocent

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The daughter of murdered black leader Malcolm X pleaded innocent today to charges of plotting to kill Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

Qubilah Shabazz, 34, entered the plea in a federal courtroom packed with reporters. She was represented by civil rights attorney William Kunstler.

Her family has blamed Farrakhan for Malcolm X's assassination 30 years ago. On Tuesday, Farrakhan himself broke his silence about the alleged plan to kill him, denouncing the government and defending Ms. Shabazz.

Jury will hear history of Simpson's violence

LOS ANGELES — The judge in the O.J. Simpson case ruled today that the jury can hear about several instances of violence in Simpson's marriage to Nicole Brown Simpson, including a 1989 incident in which he pleaded no contest to wife beating.

Superior Court Judge Lance Ito said most of the domestic violence evidence can be presented because it is necessary to prove motive and intent in the June slayings of Ms. Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman.

The decision was a major victory for prosecutors, who hope to use evidence of domestic violence during Simpson's relationship with Ms. Simpson to support their contention that her slaying was the culmination of years of abuse and degradation.

M&M's wants to update its hues

NEWARK, N.J. — Just in case some M&M's melt in your hand, not in your mouth, the manufacturer at least wants you to like the color.

M&M-Mars is asking fans of the candy-coated chocolate pieces to select the newest hue for the mix. Don't get too wild, though - the choices for Color No. 7 are blue, purple and pink.

Candy-lovers also may vote to leave the mix as it is: brown, yellow, orange, red, green and tan.

M&M-Mars is considering a seventh color so its candy reflects new color preferences of the 1990s, said Pat D'Amato, spokeswoman for Hackettstown-based M&M Mars.

The traditional mix has remained unchanged since 1949 - except for the decade-long absence of the red piece. Red was removed over a scare about food dye and restored in 1987.

Ballots to vote on the new color are available at most stores that sell candy. The results will be announced April 18. If voters go for a change the new M&M's should be in stores by September, D'Amato said.

Daily Nebraskan

FAX NUMBER 472-1761
The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during summer sessions.
Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Tim Hedegaard, 436-9258.
Subscription price is \$50 for one year.
Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, NE.
ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1995 DAILY NEBRASKAN