

China Officials Call Finding Quake Survivors Now a 'Miracle,' Warn Death Toll May Reach 50,000

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CHINA - It was a Monday that started out like any other for 10-year-old Li Yi. The middle school girl was sitting in her classroom in Beichuan County in central China, unaware that in an instant her world would change, forever. Eyewitness accounts say the school building rocked and shook violently before collapsing from the destructive force of a 7.9-strength earthquake. Li Yi awoke to find herself buried alive -- one of an estimated 20,000 people trapped in the debris of what once were thriving villages and towns.

More than 50 hours passed -- hours of torrential rain, cold, hunger and dusty air -- before rescuers stumbled upon her broken body. Miraculously, they managed to pull Li Yi from the rubble, but not before amputating her left leg in the process. The little girl's story was being played out countless times Thursday throughout the earthquake ravaged region, as rescuers raced against time to keep the death toll from climbing above 50,000.

The confirmed death toll Thursday morning reached 19,509, up from the nearly 15,000 confirmed dead the day before, according to the Earthquake and Disaster Relief Headquarters of the State Council. The council said deaths could rise to 50,000, state TV reported. More than 12,300 remained buried and another 102,100 were injured in Sichuan province alone, where the quake was centered, the vice governor told reporters.

Police and militia in Dujiangyan pulverized rubble with cranes and backhoes while crews used shovels to pick around larger pieces of debris. On one side street, about a dozen bodies were laid on a sidewalk, while incense sticks placed in a pile of sand sent smoke into the air as a tribute and to dull the stench of death. The bodies were later lifted onto a flatbed truck, joining some half-dozen corpses. Ambulances sped past, sirens wailing, filled with survivors. Workers asked the homeless to sign up for temporary housing, although it was unclear where they would live.

Hundreds of troops marched to the epicenter across the Zipingpu dam that had reportedly suffered cracks from the disaster, raising fears it could endanger communities downriver. There was no repair work or extra security seen Thursday at the dam by an Associated Press photographer, indicating that the threat to the structure had likely passed. Public donations so far have totaled \$186 million in cash and goods, Xinhua said. NBA star Yao Ming, China's most famous athlete, was planning to donate \$285,000 to the relief effort, agent Erik Zhang said.

How are Earthquake Magnitudes Measured?

The Richter magnitudes are based on a logarithmic scale (base 10). What this means is that for each whole number you go up on the Richter scale, the amplitude of the ground motion recorded by a seismograph goes up ten times. Using this scale, a magnitude 5 earthquake would result in ten times the level of ground shaking as a magnitude 4 earthquake (and 32 times as much energy would be released). To give you an idea how these numbers can add up, think of it in terms of the energy released by explosives: a magnitude 1 seismic wave releases as much energy as blowing up 6 ounces of TNT. A magnitude 8 earthquake releases as much energy as detonating six million tons of TNT. (Ref. <http://www.geo.mtu.edu/UPSeis/intensity.html>).

1. In paragraph form, explain ten-year old Li Yi's tragic encounter with the horrific earthquake that measured 7.9 on the Richter scale.
2. At a constant rate of growth equivalent to that of which occurred since Thursday morning (24-hour duration), design a table, equation, and graph to accurately predict approximately what date the death tolls will rise to projected figures reported by State TV. How is the information regarding death tolls conveyed in the table, equation, and graph? Is a linear relationship present? Explain.
3. In Sichuan province alone, express the present number of individuals reported as injured with those whom remained buried as a ratio (in three ways) in simplest form. Explain what these figures represent.
4. An earthquake that measures 7.9 on the Richter scale releases enough energy as detonation of how many more pounds than tons of TNT? Assuming the earthquake measured 8.9, how much more ground shaking and energy would be released? Explain.
5. Upon completion of this assignment, how far have we progressed through the 2007-08 series of *The Daughtry Times*®? Express your answer as a fraction, decimal, percentage, and pie chart.
6. Complete *The Daughtry Times*® "Writing Guidelines" checklist on all questions requiring a written response. To ensure compliance, neatly label each component adjacent to your paragraph.
7. Complete *The Daughtry Times*® "Preliminary Reading Guidelines" checklist prior to reading the passage and clearly identify each essential component of the article (title, keywords in italics, etc.).
8. Using contextual clues only, explain the meaning of the italicized words: *ravaged*, *logarithmic*, and *pulverized*. Additionally, use each word in a sentence to demonstrate further comprehension.
9. In paragraph form, explain at least five legitimate and educational purposes behind *The Daughtry Times*®.