

The New York Times

Updates on the Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan

By **J. David Goodman** March 11, 2011 4:13 am

The Lede is following breaking news of an 8.9 magnitude earthquake about 80 miles off the shore of Japan. Updates below mix news alerts with reports from bloggers and journalists on the ground.

10:19 P.M. Rescue by Helicopter

As daylight spread across Japan — revealing scenes of battered homes and a waterlogged landscape — rescue teams set out in helicopters to scour the hardest hit areas for survivors.

Japanese television showed military helicopters rescuing people from rooftops and balconies. One video showed a school in Sendai where the stranded staff and students had painted “S O S” in giant white letters to draw the attention of rescuers. Another clip, above, showed a military helicopter lifting two people to safety from the rooftop of their home, which was surrounded by water and debris.

6:55 P.M. Facing Quake’s Aftermath as Saturday Dawns in Japan

Television reports early Saturday in Japan were dominated by hazy dawn images of the battered nuclear plant in Fukushima and throngs of travelers struggling to reach home or friends and family.

Some travelers pictured on television even traded their white surgical face masks, worn by some public transit users, for white hardhats as fears of aftershocks continued.

More than a million comments have appeared alongside a live video stream from Japanese broadcaster NHK. It can be viewed here:

Meanwhile, as my colleague Brian Stelter reports on the Media Decoder blog, American television networks rushed to Japan, where most broadcasters were relatively short-staffed when the earthquake struck:

Recognizing the gravity of the event, networks based in the United States quickly made plans for A-list anchors to travel to Japan. NBC said it was sending Ann Curry and Lester Holt; ABC said it was sending Christiane Amanpour and David Muir; CBS said it was sending Harry Smith; CNN said it was sending Dr. Sanjay Gupta and Soledad O'Brien.

The networks are effectively parachuting people in, just as they do for other disasters around the world. But that means there is a roughly 24-hour lag time in the coverage. About eight hours after the quake, only one of the three network morning shows in the United States, "The Early Show" on CBS, had a live report from a journalist in Japan. That journalist was a freelancer who had worked for CBS for years.

6:12 P.M. More on Surging Waters in Oregon and California

At least five people who came to the land's edge in northern California and southern Oregon on Friday to watch as seas surged from the distant Japanese earthquake were swept away by those same waters, The Associated Press reported, with four being rescued. But at least one man who was taking pictures of the waves in northern California was still missing on Friday.

It appeared that The A.P. was referring to the same episode reported earlier by a local television station in Crescent City, Calif. That earlier report said that at least one person who had been swept away was dead and another still missing. The A.P. said that a man in Brookings, Ore., had been found dead on a commercial vessel, but that local officials said he appeared to have died of natural causes. The differing reports could not be immediately sorted out.

Coast Guard helicopters searched for a missing man near the mouth of the Klamath River in Del Norte County, Calif., The A.P. said, but his chance of survival appeared slim given the roughness of the ocean and the cold.

5:17 P.M. Radiation Said to Surge at Nuclear Plant After Quake

As Japan awoke on Saturday to the devastation left by the one-two punch of an 8.9 magnitude earthquake and a deadly tsunami, Japanese officials warned that damage to a coastal nuclear reactor may have resulted in a radiation leak after its cooling system was knocked offline on Friday.

The video below shows the nuclear plant on Friday as the ocean surged around it.

News agencies and others were reporting that radiation levels surged around the plant.

Thousands of residents had already been evacuated from a 6-mile area surrounding the plant, in Fukushima, about 150 miles north of Tokyo.

Officials now saying radiation at Fukushima nuke plant 1,000X normal level.

#jpquake

Fri Mar 11 21:43:34 via TweetDeck

Steve Herman

W7VOA

My colleague Matthew L. Wald is reporting on the evolving situation at the plant and discussed events earlier on Friday.

3:51 P.M. Budget Battles and Tsunami Preparedness

What's the best way to survive a tsunami? Christopher Beam, writing in Slate.com answers: Run uphill.

But he notes: "If you're smart, however, you'll have prepared ahead of time."

Tsunami preparedness does not come free, however; indeed, it has been the subject of political wrangling in Washington, as **The Associated Press** points out on Friday.

A spending plan approved by the House of Representatives includes cuts to the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, among other spending reductions to the National Weather Service.

3:40 P.M. Former U.S. Ambassador's Thoughts

Tom Schieffer, who served as the United States ambassador to Japan from 2005 to 2009, shared these with The Lede on the impact of the tsunami and the American response:

This earthquake will have a huge impact on Japan. The Japanese have the best knowledge and technology available to deal with earthquakes. We regularly exercise with them on the possibility of this happening, but no one can really prepare for an earthquake of this magnitude.

The fact, however, that we have such a large American presence in Japan will help us help them. Already, today, you saw the American Air Force base at Yokota taking flights that couldn't land at Narita.

We have naval vessels, helicopters and cargo planes that I am sure will be used to move relief and medical supplies to where they are needed.

I know that we will do everything possible to be as good a friend and ally to the Japanese as they have always been to us when disaster struck.

This is our turn to repay the kindness they showed us after Katrina.

3:37 P.M. Following Developments on Twitter

The Twitter module on the righthand side of this blog has updates on the disaster in Japan. Among others, we are following these Twitter feeds at the moment:

Journalists:

@gakuranman (*a writer*)

@tokyoreporter (*a reporter based in Nakameguro, Tokyo*)

@TomokoHosaka (*an AP reporter*)

@KyungLahCNN (*a CNN reporter*)

Service sites:

@earthoutreach (*Google Earth*)

@TsunamiPacific

@RedCross

News sites:

@japantimes

@DailyYomiuri

@timeouttokyo

@TWCBreaking

There are also several hashtags that can help when searching for news on Twitter: #jishin ; #tsunami ; #japan ; #earthquake ; #jpquake ; and, for how the tsunami is affecting the United States, #HItsunami (for Hawaii) and #CATsunami (for California).