

## Search effort turns to underground areas

Written by Taiwan Tati Cultural & Educational Foundation  
Saturday, 13 February 2016 08:45 -

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Eight-year-old Lin Su-chin, who was trapped in Tainan's Weiguan Jinlong complex for 60 hours, yesterday drinks a Slurpee given her by Premier Simon Chang at Chi Mei Medical Center. Lin said after her rescue on Monday night that one of the things she wanted most was one of the drinks.

**Photo courtesy of Chi Mei Medical Center**

Search-and-rescue teams yesterday finished clearing away most of the above-ground levels of the collapsed Weiguan Jinlong complex in Tainan, as the number of bodies discovered amid the rubble rose rapidly.

At press time last night, 31 bodies were found overnight on Thursday and yesterday, bringing the total death toll from the quake in Tainan to 95.

Twenty-seven Weiguan Jinlong residents are still unaccounted for.

Most of the bodies that were retrieved over the past 24 hours had been so badly crushed that they were not readily identifiable, even by gender, rescue personnel speaking on condition of anonymity said.

At press time last night, rubble from most of the complex's nine residential sections had been cleared away using heavy equipment, leaving buildings A and G as the focus of search efforts.

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Both had been pushed several meters into the ground after buildings H and I — which formed the ends of the U-shaped complex — collapsed on top of them.

Tainan Civil Engineers' Association president Cheng Ming-chang (鄭明昌) yesterday morning told a briefing to relatives of the missing that most of the people still unaccounted for were likely in those underground sections, which presented a particular challenge to the search teams.

Building A fell to the ground at an angle because of the soft soil and was severely damaged when Building H collapsed on top of it, he said.

Building G was similarly sandwiched under Building I, with the walls of its top story pushed down almost to street level.

While there had been concern yesterday that rain might affect rescue efforts, there should not be significant problems except for the searchers' ease of movement now that much of the accumulated dirt had been carted away, Cheng said.

There was no timetable for dismantling the underground sections, he said.

Bodies that were retrieved yesterday were taken by ambulance to the Tainan Funeral Parlor, where DNA tests would be conducted to help determine their identities.

A Buddhist "Puja" memorial service marking the end of the first week since the disaster was held yesterday at a special memorial hall at the parlor dedicated to earthquake victims.

President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), president-elect Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文), Premier Simon Chang (吳敦義), Legislative Speaker Su Jia-chyuan (蘇嘉全) and many other politicians attended the service.

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Taiwan Rescue (台灣救災) volunteers were pulled from the Weiguan Jinlong site in Yongkang District (永康) on Thursday night, and Tainan Deputy Mayor Tseng Hsu-cheng (曾淑成) yesterday said that there were enough personnel — a total of 919 — to handle the rest of the search, including crews from other cities and counties.

Search teams were being rotated in and out every two hours, Tseng said.

The non-governmental search-and-rescue organization withdrew after complaining that its access to the site had been restricted, preventing its members from fully participating in rescue efforts.

In other developments, the Ministry of Economic Affairs yesterday said that water service in quake-devastated areas of Tainan was set to resume last night.

Pipelines carrying water to about 30,000 households had been damaged by the quake, the National Fire Agency said.

Water would be sent via a 1km temporary above-ground pipeline, which has been connected to intact underground pipelines, the ministry said.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2016/02/13](#)