

GET OUT NOW

THOUSANDS of Britons are to be evacuated by the UK Government as fears grew last night over Japan's stricken nuclear power plant.

17,000 Brits to fly home

Special flights were being chartered by the Foreign Office to carry as many as 17,000 from Tokyo to Hong Kong, with additional places block-booked on commercial airlines.

lost essential control. That is our analysis, even if it's not what they are saying."

It said 200 would fly out on a Cathay Pacific flight to Hong Kong today, with more leaving Tokyo tomorrow.

The US State Department has laid out flights for American citizens wishing to leave and is bringing home 600 relatives of diplomatic and other staff.

Foreign Office advice to remaining Brits is that they do not go within 50 miles of the Fukushima nuclear plant.

Australian foreign minister Kevin Rudd also told his countrymen to leave Japan, but said his main concern was

problems caused by damage to infrastructure and aftershocks.

China has moved thousands of people to Tokyo to prepare for evacuation and most other countries have also advised their nationals to leave.

As the evacuation accelerated, British Airways said it was looking to test passengers arriving from Japan for signs of nuclear contamination.

The carrier said flights to Tokyo's Narita and Haneda airports will make stopovers in Hong Kong, partly to protect crew from radiation exposure.

A spokeswoman for BA said: "There's not a requirement for us to test but we are exploring the options."



▲ SHOCK Tom amid the ruins

I've had a glimpse of what hell looks like

EYE WITNESS TOM PARRY in the ruins of Kamaishi

THE apocalyptic devastation emerges unexpectedly.

Travelling down through the mountains to the battered coastline I am suddenly in the midst of a nightmarish wasteland.

Telegraph poles are scattered about like matchsticks, whole houses are upended and spiked into the mud roof first, a car is crumpled over the railings of a bridge as if made of modelling clay, and giant fir trees are yanked out by their roots.

All around are bizarre sights: a tractor perched precariously on a car, a plastic door frame stuck in a tree, and a 100ft fishing trawler on top of flattened homes.

Soldiers trample through thick gunge left by the black tsunami wave, lifting up debris with metal poles to search for dead bodies.

The troops paint a red cross on the front of a building to show it has been checked.

Five minutes earlier, I was in the serene surroundings of snow-capped hills. Now, in once idyllic Otsuchi, I've been shown a glimpse of hell.

This is a world where nature's savagery has shown no mercy.

Only a supermarket and a temple remain standing.

The destruction actually begins several streets beyond a government road sign which reads, "Estimated tsunami inundation ends here".

Even scientists' most dire predictions far under-estimated the force of this wave.

Former resident Yoko Fujiwa, 35, points out where her house used to be. Now all that remains are the foundations.

Her 73-year-old mother is missing, presumed dead.

In Kamaishi, further south, a pipe which straddled the river is severed at both ends and three floors of an office building on its banks are demolished.

On the main street, outside an obliterated market building, three cars are flattened against a wall.

Metal panels are stripped like wallpaper from the hollowed-out buildings they used to cover. The grubby high water stain can be seen clearly on the third floor of a block of flats

severed in two by crashing debris. Standing in front of his ruined vehicles, local mechanic Toshifumi Kikuchi, 36, tells me: "My yard here is at least 10 metres above the estuary but the water came over them. I had to run to the forest above to safety."

"When I returned, it looked like a giant had picked the vehicles up and stabbed them back into the ground."

The most heart-wrenching symbols of lives torn apart are the children's toys and ordinary household objects dumped miles from the family homes where they were once treasured.

While in Kamaishi, I spot a soft toy kangaroo by the roadside, now lost forever to its young owner.

Every single homeless survivor will have to rebuild his or her life from scratch.

Fishmonger Yukio Sachiko, 58, shrugs his shoulders in despair as he looks at the tip his old seafront store has become.

But after poking tentatively at the piles of rubbish, he hugs his wife Sachiko, saying: "At least we made it to the third floor of our building. We've got nothing but we feel fortunate."

Another 10 miles down the coast is Rikuzentakata, where the unstoppable flow of water swallowed up a whole town.

Not a single one of the 2,700 homes in the port area remains intact.

Until a few days ago rescue teams were pulling bodies from the rubble, but now they appear to have moved on.

Like every other affected town, survivors search desperately for mementoes from their ruined homes. For most it is a salvage operation; repair is out of the question.

Back on the rubble-strewn highway there is a fleeting glimmer of hope.

Two friends, both women in their 20s, are unexpectedly reunited. One cries as she hugs her elated companion.

Behind them, a group of men shovel rubble into piles for a bulldozer to clear away. When that mammoth task is over, no one knows what comes next.



▲ AGONY Girl in house ruins



▲ HUG Friends are reunited



WASTE LAND Kamaishi in ruins

JAPAN'S NIGHTMARE

I survived Hiroshima ..but this is WORSE

GRAN, 80, ON TSUNAMI HORROR

TWO survivors of the devastating earthquake and tsunami tell the Mirror's TOM PARRY about their terrifying ordeals in the city of Kamaishi and how they are now facing an uncertain future amid the destruction

HIROSHIMA survivor Itoko Kanagawa has vivid memories of the nuclear bomb attack which scarred the rest of her life.

The 80-year-old grandmother never recovered properly from the carnage, so she moved to Japan's northeast coast well away from painful memories.

But after last week's terrifying tsunami, she feels as though she is reliving the Second World War's deadliest moment when an American atomic bomb killed tens of thousands.

As she walks from the pulverised modest home in Kamaishi where she lived with husband Kazuya, she shakes her head in sorrow.

Itoko has lost every single photograph of her three beloved grandchildren and all of the possessions which she and her ex-school teacher partner have saved for over the years.

"What I witnessed in 1945 scarred me for ever, but this is even worse," she says. "It feels worse because this was nothing to do with war, it was just nature. Nothing could have survived that wave. It came rushing in at such speed. After the earthquake warning sounded I managed to get up to the temple above the

hills behind us. A man took us in his car. Otherwise we would have died like so many other retired people around here who were not quick enough, or didn't have transport.

"We slept overnight in the hospital, with just our jackets over us, and then we came down the day after to see what it was like.

"I thought, 'Oh no, it's happened again.' Everything was just gone or broken just like Hiroshima.

"I was just shuddering after that. To be taken back to such a dark time when you're old and settled down like me doesn't seem fair. I have suffered enough in this life.

"I don't feel I deserve this."

Itoko and Kazuya are now sleeping on camp beds in an old school building being used as a temporary shelter on the higher ground above Kamaishi.

"I have no idea what happens next," she adds. "We might go to stay with my daughter's family in

Tokyo, but that is not safe because of the threat of radiation.

"We don't know whether we will receive compensation or a new house. Everything is uncertain."

WHEN I meet Junichi Kano he is retrieving his car insurance papers from the wreck of his car, dumped upside-down half a mile from where he parked it.

The silver Honda people carrier is upended at 45 degrees, with its front bumper plunged first into the ground.

Junichi, 45, is grieving for his wife Athusko, also 45, but seems eager to start repairing the damage to his life.

And he waits anxiously for news of his parents, who are missing.

But somehow, in a triumph of human resistance, Junichi makes light of his predicament, joking: "I'm not sure if my car insurance will cover this."

The former baker, who ran a popular shop with Athusko a few hundred metres down the main street, seems determined not to be beaten by the catastrophe.

He explains what happened to his loved ones matter-of-factly.

"Our bakery was on the ground floor and we lived in a flat on the third floor of the same building," he says.

"I heard the alert so I stayed where I was.

"I called down to my wife and she heard me. She said, 'I'm coming, I'm

coming'. I suppose she was just getting on with jobs and she kept putting it off.

"And it came over us so quickly. I had gone into the bedroom and then I heard the rush of water. I looked down from the window and it was just swelling over the doors of our bakery.

"Cars were being pushed around; everything seemed to be just swept away. I knew instantly that she would be dead.

"No one can survive something like that.

"The force was just too strong."

Junichi covered in the upstairs flat for more than 24 hours before the water level was low enough for him to go down and explore the devastation.

There was no sign of Athusko. The bakery was completely ruined.

As he waded through the waist-high waters sloshing around the empty streets he called out for his parents, who lived only a few doors away.

But in his heart he felt that they too had been taken in the wave of destruction.

That day, Junichi says, they were probably going for a walk along the coastline, oblivious to the imminent horror.



▲ SHOCKED Itoko Kanagawa

MY STORY

I don't feel I deserve this



▲ STUNNED Junichi Kano

MY STORY

I've no idea what is next

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