

Earthquake hits Rhodes

THE Athens Geodynamic Institute says a strong earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 6.3 struck today near the Greek island of Rhodes.

One woman was killed when she slipped and fell as she tried to flee her home. However, the earthquake did not cause any major damage.

The Geodynamic Institute said the epicentre was 275 miles south-east of Athens, beneath the seabed south of Rhodes. Residents and tourists fled their homes and hotels in panic.

MPs want probe on 'torture'

MPs are demanding an investigation into allegations that British intelligence officials "outsourced the torture" of UK citizens to Pakistani security agencies.

John McDonnell, Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington, and Andrew Tyrie, Conservative member for Chichester, have called for the claims of abuse to be examined by the Intelligence and Security Committee, which oversees both MI5 and MI6.

Huge fuel strike in Japan

HUNDREDS of thousands of fishermen across Japan went on strike today to protest over rising fuel prices.

The strike was the largest yet for the industry, involving 200,000 boats and 400,000 workers, organisers said. More than 3,000 fishermen from across the country gathered in central Tokyo and marched around the fisheries ministry in protest. "Fisherman have passed the limits of what they can do on their own," said a spokesman.

Stabbing: Two arrested

TWO people have been arrested on suspicion of murdering an 18-year-old who died after being stabbed during a fight.

Melvin Bryan was wounded in the neck and chest at a bedsit in Gloucester Road, Edmonton, north London, on Thursday.

Scotland Yard said a 23-year-old man and a 28-year-old man were arrested yesterday afternoon.

And finally...

EXPERTS at London's Natural History Museum pride themselves on being able to classify and display thousands of species, but are baffled about the identity of a tiny bug that has appeared in the museum's own gardens.

The almond-shaped red and black insect is about the size of a grain of rice. The museum has more than 28 million insect species in its collection, but none is an exact match for this bug.

reports

Mohammed Yaseen has been dealing with the sharp end of knife crime for years.

The Nottingham-based youth worker is a big believer in restorative justice.

But he says proposals unveiled by the Home Secretary today are "academically sound" but flawed.

Jacqui Smith plans for knife offenders to visit knife victims in hospitals and knife offenders in prisons.

"It will fall on youth workers to arrange this work with virtually no extra finance and resources," said Mr Yaseen. "The Youth Justice Board had a £417m budget last year but just £18.5m went into offender resettlement and after care.

"There is plenty of evidence... that restorative justice works. The big question is how is that work going to be paid for and managed."

Allan Breeton, of Nottingham Crime & Drugs Partnership, is heading up a bid for Home Office funding for a survey seeking the views on knife crime of each school child in the city.

He said: "No one thing is going to stop knife crime.

"Taking knife offenders into hospitals to see stabbing victims will have an effect on some but the most important issue is getting in early.

"The Early Intervention Programme in Nottingham is crucial and must be supported by parents, youngsters, schools, the police and others pulling in the same direction.

"I'm 53. I don't think like a young person does. It's no good getting a bunch of mostly adult middle class people sitting around a table deciding on what youngsters should do - we need to work with them and listen to what they are saying."

Police statistics show knife crime in Nottingham has fallen by more than a quarter in a year. There were 59 stabbings recorded in the 12 months to March 31 - a 27% fall on the year before. However, the figures did not include incidents over the last two months, including the alleged murder of Mark Beard, 25, in Bulwell.

Clayton Byfield, from Arnold, founded the website www.no-guns.co.uk, which encourages youngsters to post blogs about their experiences of knife and gun crime as well as inter area rivalries. He took part in a live Channel 4 debate earlier this month.

"Taking knife offenders into hospitals won't work. Taking them to a

'Political claptrap' on knives

Government plan is 'flawed'

morgue would have far more impact," said the 43-year-old father-of-four.

"I would like to see a prison exchange programme involving countries such as Russia and Thailand. A week in their prisons would be a huge shock for those involved in knife crime. Young people I talk to see going to prisons here as giving them status.

"Official figures on gun and knife crime in Nottingham are a smokescreen. The reality is far worse."

Shehzad Ghani is a youth leader for the Muslim Youth Development Project based at the Bobbersmill Community Centre and al-Shifa Mosque.

He said: "A lot of the knife crime is to do with to be seen to be protecting turf. It is not just knives though. I

know young people who use asps and knuckle dusters.

"The police and teacher-taught Dare programme in schools should be extended to include knives and guns and youth workers like myself, who are seen as having more street cred, could teach it."

Retired Notts judge Keith Matthewman QC dismissed the Government's proposals as "political claptrap."

"I spent almost 40 years talking to criminals nearly every day. They only thing they want is to escape punishment."

John Clarke, chairman of Notts Police Authority, said: "Restorative justice can play a useful role but I don't think a stabbing victim recovering in hospital will want to see a knife offender at the end of their ward bed.

"You hear a lot about prisons being full but there are disused Army bases and other Ministry of Defence facilities that would make ideal boot camps. The time has come to stop pussyfooting around and get tough on knife crime."

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CLAPTRAP: Keith Matthewman

black supporters

DEMOCRATIC presidential candidate Barack Obama received a proud welcome from the annual NAACP convention, but in a stirring speech to the nation's oldest civil rights organisation, he insisted black people must show greater responsibility for improving their own lives.

Mr Obama, the son of a black father and white mother, who could become the first president with African-American ancestry, urged Washington to provide more education and economic assistance. He received lusty applause as he urged blacks to demand more of themselves.



CALL: Obama

Charles gets an insight into the Teach First way

THE Prince of Wales was meeting teachers and business leaders involved in the Teach First programme on a visit to a secondary school in east London today.

At a meeting at Bethnal Green

Technology College he was speaking to those behind the programme and seeing first hand how it has had an impact in helping to transform schools.

Teach First is an educational charity which recruits exceptional graduates from top universities and trains them to become teachers. The scheme has been hailed as a success.



VISIT: Charles

