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Thursday, August

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China earthquake toll rises

The death toll in an earthquake in south-west China has risen to four, as hospitals struggled to cope with the nearly 600 injured people.

Rescuers are continuing to search for survivors.

The 5.6 Richter-scale quake ripped through Ludian County in Yunnan province late Tuesday on Tuesday, flattening almost 10,000 houses and forcing the evacuation of 50,000 people.

A National Seismological Bureau official says that the death toll has increased to four.

Of the 594 people injured, 26 are listed in critical condition and 142 as serious.

News agency Xinhua reports local hospitals have been overwhelmed by the injured and some have had to be treated in courtyards.

The county government says 155 schools have been affected, and factories, office buildings and reservoirs have been destroyed or damaged.

Li Ranwan, from the disaster affairs office of the Ludian County civil affairs bureau, says the death toll is likely to rise and food, clothes, medicine and tents are desperately needed.

-- **AFP**

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