

## Dozens Die as Japanese Train Jumps Track and Hits Building

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**T**OKYO, April 25 - A speeding commuter train derailed this morning in western Japan and crashed into an apartment building, killing 50 passengers and injuring more than 400, in what the authorities here described as the deadliest train accident in four decades.

The train, which had been running 90 seconds behind schedule in a suburb of Osaka, approached a curve at possibly twice the speed limit, before five of its seven cars jumped the tracks. The first two cars slammed into an apartment building 20 feet from the tracks, with the front car crashing into the first-floor parking garage.

Tonight rescue workers were combing through the wreckage, trying to free four passengers trapped in the first car and believed to be alive. The train was carrying about 580 passengers.

Officials at the West Japan Railway Company, which operates the train, said at a news conference that they were investigating the cause of the accident. They said that the speed limit at the curve was 44 miles per hour, and that derailments could occur at speeds over 83 miles per hour.

But the officials said they did not know how fast the train was running and that other reasons, including pebbles on the tracks, might have been factors in the derailment.

One passenger, Tatsuya Akashi, recalled "a violent shaking, and the next moment I was thrown to the floor."

"I landed on top of a pile of other people," he told Japan's public broadcasting network, NHK, according to The Associated Press. "I didn't know what happened, and there were many people bleeding."

Photos taken by an NHK reporter aboard the train

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Associated Press

The train was behind schedule and may have been speeding when it jumped the tracks in Amagasaki, Japan.

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showed passengers piled on the floor and some clawing to escape, The A.P. reported.

A train crewman told the police that he "felt the train was going faster than usual," NHK said, echoing comments from others survivors, The A.P. reported.

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Yoshikazu Tsuno/AFP -- Getty Images

At least four people remained trapped in the wreckage more than 11 hours after the train crash in western Japan.

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