

Thousands killed in Asian tsunami

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More than 11,000 people in six countries were killed today when the most powerful earthquake in 40 years triggered huge tidal waves that hit coastlines across Asia. The death toll is almost certain to rise further as the full extent of the devastation emerges. Tourists, fishermen, hotels, homes and cars were swept away by walls of water unleashed by the 8.9-magnitude earthquake, centred off the west coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra. The countries affected were Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, Thailand, Malaysia and the Maldives. Among the worst hit was the island of Sri Lanka, 1,000 miles west of the epicentre. The death toll stood tonight at up to 4,500, with a million people displaced by the surging wall of water, according to police and Tamil Tiger rebels. Sri Lanka's government declared a national disaster. In Indonesia Reuters reported that 3,000 people had been killed in the city of Banda Aceh alone, in the province of Aceh on the northern tip of Sumatra Island.

In India, the waves swept away boats, homes and vehicles killing up to 3,000 people in the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Pondicherry, officials said. Hundreds of bodies were found on beaches in Tamil Nadu, and more are expected to be washed in by the sea, officials said.

In Thailand, one of Asia's most popular holiday destinations at this time of year, at least 289 people were reported to have been killed and 3,675 injured. According to media reports and the Thai foreign ministry, the tourists missing, injured or dead include nationals of Britain, South Korea, Japan, Germany, South Africa, Hong Kong, Denmark, Australia, Malaysia, Mexico, Russia, Sweden and the United States.

The global Red Cross issued an emergency appeal for immediate aid, and President Bush offered "all appropriate assistance to those nations most affected". He said US relief efforts were already under way to help people in Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Throughout the day harrowing stories emerged as survivors described what they had witnessed and experienced. Philippe Gilbert, on holiday in the southern Sri Lankan resort of Tangalle, recounted how he had gripped a tree and watched helplessly as his four-year-old granddaughter was dragged away by waves triggered by the quake. "I was completely carried by an absolutely monstrous wave that towered over the bungalow," Mr Gilbert said in a telephone interview broadcast by French television station LCI. "I lost my granddaughter in it."

The earthquake was the world's fifth most powerful since 1900 and the strongest since a 9.2-magnitude quake hit Alaska in 1964, US earthquake experts said.

The force of it shook unusually far afield, causing buildings to sway hundreds of miles away, from Singapore to the city of Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, and in Bangladesh, hours after the region's Christian communities had finished Christmas celebrations.

SOURCE B: Taken from news.bbc.co.uk
Tsunami eyewitness account

My partner and I were staying in Beruwela on the south-west coast of Sri Lanka when the tsunami hit. We watched from the first floor of our hotel as a wall of water swept in and tore the ground floor apart underneath us.

Waiting to be evacuated to Colombo was very frightening as everyone was fearful of another and possibly bigger wave coming. At one stage we heard – wrongly – that another wave was coming and there was panic. 5

Miraculously, a fleet of small vehicles driven by local people arrived outside the hotel and we jumped into a minibus.

We were taken up a hill to a place of safety where we were welcomed by a family and told we could stay as long as we needed to. Amid all this death and destruction these people were trying to help us. We were shown the local mosque where hundreds of locals were cooking, collecting and distributing food and supplies for those less fortunate. 10

In the three days we were waiting to leave we saw many examples of ordinary Sri Lankans, many of whom had lost friends, family and livelihoods while trying to help others who were worse off. It was a very moving experience. 15

Alison Clarke, Chelmsford UK

Q1: Read Source A, lines 1 to 20.

Choose four statements below which are TRUE.

- Thailand is a popular holiday destination ☐
- The tsunami affected eight different countries ☐
- The tsunami was caused by an earthquake ☐
- Sri Lanka suffered the highest death toll of any country affected ☐
- Banda Aceh is a city on Sumatra Island ☐
- Up to 2,000 people were killed in India ☐
- The earthquake was 9.8 magnitude ☐

Q2: Refer to Source A and Source B. Write about the differences between the two texts. Aim to write 100 – 150 words.

Q3: Re-read this passage, taken from Source B.

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In the three days we were waiting to leave we saw many examples of ordinary Sri Lankans, many of whom had lost friends, family and livelihoods while trying to help others who were worse off. It was a very moving experience.

How does the writer use language to convey her sense of gratitude to the reader?