

At least 27 asylum seekers die as boat sinks off Australia

SYDNEY (AP) - A wooden boat packed with asylum seekers smashed against jagged rocks in a storm off an Australian island Wednesday, flinging terrified occupants into churning waters and killing at least 27 people.

Christmas Island residents on a cliff above watched in horror as the boat - carrying about 70 people - broke apart with a crack, dumping screaming men, women and children into monstrous waves that pounded them against the rocks.

Officials gave no immediate word on the nationality of the victims. The Customs and Border Protection Service said in a statement Wednesday that 27 bodies had been recovered from the water. Forty-one survivors were plucked from the seas, and one person made it to shore.

"The rescue is being conducted in extremely difficult and dangerous conditions," the customs department said. "The search and rescue situation is ongoing."

Women and children were among the dead, Western Australia state Premier Colin Barnett said in a statement.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service sent doctors to the island to treat 30 injured victims, said Jooley Pettit-Scott, the group's spokeswoman. Three patients were critically injured, two men with head injuries and one woman with blunt abdominal trauma, she said.

Acting Prime Minister Wayne Swan said the vessel was a people smuggler's boat, but it was not clear where the passengers were from.

Photos and videos taken by witnesses at the scene show the wooden boat crashing into the rocks and breaking apart. The images also show people floating in the water amid the wreckage. It is unclear if they are alive or dead. The boat was about 20 to 30 feet (6 to 9 meters) long, with a cabin covered by a sheet of fabric or plastic.

The Australian Federal Police would say only that they had responded to a "maritime incident" involving a suspected illegal vessel on the island. The department declined to comment further.

No harm in Sinhalese settling in N & E - Muralitharan

by Harischandra Gunaratna

Deputy Minister of Resettlement Vinayagamorthy Muralitharan on Monday (Dec 13) said that there was no harm in Sinhalese settling down in the North in the post-war era. Testifying before the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), the former LTTE Commander recalled how those Sinhala families were forced leave their homes during the early stage of hostilities.

The National List MP said that many Sinhala families had been engaged in various businesses in the North.

"If they own land there they can always return. If Tamils can buy property in Colombo, Galle or Matara then, why can't the Sinhalese do the same in the North and the East," he asked.

Responding to a question by the LLRC, the Deputy Minister denied that the government was in the process of changing

the ethnic balance in the North and the East. He dismissed unsubstantiated reports of State-sponsored settlements in the two provinces.

The Deputy Minister said Muslims, who had been forced to flee the Northern Province in 1990, could return to their villages. Similarly the Sinhalese, who had lost their homes and businesses in the North, could return there.

Asked whether he had been the Batticaloa leader of the LTTE, at the time the Tigers massacred 600 unarmed policemen in June 1990, the MP said that he was in Jaffna. He alleged the massacre was carried out by LTTE cadres at the behest of LTTE Intelligence Wing leader Pottu Amman.

The Deputy Minister alleged that the UNP never wanted to destroy the LTTE

and used the precarious situation for its political advantage.

"The UNP allowed the LTTE to establish camps numbering over 400 after the government and the LTTE signed a CFA in February 2002. We were allowed to carry weapons and that gave us a big advantage," Muralitharan said.

Responding to another question, the Deputy Minister said that the situation was under control, though there had been reports of extortion and abductions taking place in the East even after the war. But there could be isolated incidents, he said.

The Deputy Minister said that families of Muslims massacred in two mosques in Kattankudy over two decades ago should be compensated along with victims of LTTE atrocities.

"There are about 80,000 war widows in

the North and the East and a large number of children who have lost either one parent or both due to the war," he said.

Muralitharan alleged that Tamil political parties weren't doing anything to alleviate the suffering of the war displaced. He went on to blame the TNA and the TMVP for failing to take meaningful measures in support of the affected people.

"They must work together to address the issues of the Tamils," he added.

He told the Commission that visiting other countries to attend peace talks opened his eyes and provided him an opportunity to see people of different ethnicities lived in harmony in those countries and this brought about a change in him.

"The LTTE used innocent civilians as human shields during the last stages of the 'Humanitarian Operation' and at least 3000 people lost their lives as a result, he said.

Karuna before LLRC



Sri Lanka Tourism welcomes the 600,000th tourist



In the picture Sri Lanka Tourism Chairman, Dr. Nalaka Godahewa and Malraj Kiriella, Managing Director of Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau welcoming Nick Davis, CEO of Merchant Maritime Warfare Centre, UK - the 600,000th tourist and his partner Ms. Layla Dayani of UK at the Bandaranaika International Airport on Tuesday (Dec. 14). Mr. Davis and Ms. Dayani arrived in the Sri Lanka Airlines flight UL 506 from London at 3.55 p.m.

Demo by Lankans in Italy in front of British HC today

Sri Lankans living in Italy have organised a massive demonstration in Rome on Thursday, December 16, at 2.00 p.m. in front of the British Embassy, calling on the British Government to use the same standards towards the LTTE as it does towards all terrorist organizations banned in Europe and Britain. A spokesman for the Sri Lankan Associations in Italy states that what happened when President Mahinda Rajapaksa visited the UK shows the dubious standards adopted by the British Govt. in the name of democracy and freedom of speech.

The British Govt. would never permit members of Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Hamas or terrorist Turkish organizations to demonstrate at the airport if the Israeli President or PM visited the country. They would use all possible force to prevent the holding of such demonstrations, arrest the demonstrators and imprison them, he said. Therefore, when the President visited the UK, the British Government *per se* approved the visit. Though the President was not on a State visit, the Government should not have bent down to a terrorist organization, permitting them to wave Tiger flags and insignia, and display the picture of Prabhakaran, he said. Thereafter, the British Govt. refused to permit an additional number of police to protect the President who was delivering his speech at the Oxford Union, he said.

"We, Sri Lankans in Italy, irrespective of our political affiliations, stand united in our appeal to the

British Government not to feed the terrorists, who will bite your hand in return. Sri Lanka is a member of the Commonwealth and this incident has brought shame to the British Govt. as it was unable to handle 200 demonstrators coerced by the LTTE, which is trying to regain a foothold in Britain and Sri Lanka. If the Government permitted the President to deliver his speech and prevented the LTTE terrorists from demonstrating, it would strengthen the hands of the Government in its fight against terrorism.

"We are forging ahead with the development of the North and East, inhabited by the Tamils, and as peace has dawned, Tamil politicians who supported the LTTE are now in consultation with the Government to develop the North and East.

"We request the British Government to adopt the policy of the Italian Government, which is a member of the European Union, which would never permit the LTTE, a banned terrorist organization, to protest against the President.

"In the recent past, the President has visited Italy twice and was welcomed by the Italian Government. There wasn't a single person protesting or holding any flags or insignias whatsoever, other than those who cheered the President, en route to Rome."

All the Buddhist and Catholic Associations and the Italian Anti-Terrorist Association, will congregate to condemn the British duplicity in dealing with the terrorists.

An India-China rail link through Nepal proposed

By S. Venkat Narayan

NEW DELHI, December 15: A trans-Himalayan rail link connecting India and China through Nepal has been proposed by a visiting Nepalese leader to promote greater trade and people-to-people contacts between the two Asian giants as well as the landlocked country.

Saying that Nepal looks at both India and China as new opportunities for development, Nepal's former Foreign Minister Dr Prakash Chandra Lohani today made this proposal at a seminar here.

Dr Lohani, co-chairman and parliamentary department head of the Rashtriya Janashakti Party (RJP), said developing this new connectivity as a rail link will immensely help all the three countries, especially India and China, world's top emerging economies, whose bilateral trade is increasing

connectivity and Nepal as the link is a big challenge," Dr Lohani said while speaking on "Nepal's evolving relations with India and China" at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), a public policy

think tank headquartered here. He promised that Nepal will remain sensitive to the "minimum national interests" of both China and India, and called for cooperation between these countries to utilize the vast Himalayan water resources in the best possible way.

"Water is going to be a big issue in the region. With India growing so fast, it

out. Already Nepal is providing huge water resources to India, he pointed out. Dr. Lohani said India and China, in consultation with the international community, should make it clear to the warring political parties in Nepal that leading the state through constitutional means is the only acceptable route to power and not street revolution to "capture the state" as is being advocated by the Maoists.

"A democratic and strong Nepali state—ideologically democratic, economically liberal and linked with the rising giants in our neighbourhood—is in the best national interest of India, in all three areas - political, economic and security," Dr Lohani argued.

He said the big neighbours should also resist the temptation to manipulate or micro-manage Nepal's politics, which



UK police gave 800 men for President Rajapaksa's visit



The British police had deployed approximately 800 men around the area where President Mahinda Rajapaksa was traveling, during his recent visit to London to address the Oxford Union, the British House of Commons was told.

British Minister for Police Nick Herbert has told the House of Commons that approximately 800 officers were deployed across the Metropolitan Police area for the visit by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, according to the Hansard of Monday's House of Commons proceedings.

He was responding to a question posed by

and police community support officers were deployed for the visit of the President and what the cost to the police service was of policing the visit.

Herbert did not mention the cost details as he did not have the figures but instead only mention about the number of police officers on duty based on information he got from the police.

During the President's visit several LTTE supporters took to the streets and staged protests against President Mahinda Rajapaksa resulting in his scheduled Oxford Union address being cancelled at the last minute over security fears. (News Now.lk)

DEATH

SENARATNE - NILMINI (Science Teacher, Thurstan College). Beloved wife of U. de Edirisinghe (Ocean Lanka Private Ltd.), expired. Funeral will take place on Saturday 18th December at 2.30 p.m. at Family Burial Grounds, No. 198/1, Ulladupitiya West, Werellagama.

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Mass Times at ST. ANTHONY'S SHRINE Kochchikade - Colombo 13

* Daily Mass:

6.00 a.m. - Tamil
12.15 p.m. - Sinhala

* Tuesday St. Anthony's Novena & Mass:

6.00 a.m. - Tamil
11.30 a.m. - Benediction
12.00 noon - English
5.30 p.m. - Benediction
6.00 p.m. - Sinhala
8.30 p.m. - Benediction

* First Friday Mass:

6.00 a.m. - Tamil
12.15 p.m. - Sinhala
6.30 p.m. - Tamil

* Sunday Mass:

Saturday - 6.00 p.m. - English
Sunday - 5.30 a.m. & 7.30 a.m. - Tamil
- 12.15 p.m. & 5.30 p.m. - Sinhala



FISCAL AUCTION IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF BATTICALOA

Hatton National Bank Limited of No. 10, R. A. De Mel Mawatha, Colombo 2 having a branch office and a place of business at No. 5, Central Road, Batticaloa.

Case No: Misc/4142/ 01 Plaintiff

Vs.
1. Shanmugam Shanmuganesan, 'Rajeswary Stores', No. 19 & 21, Trinco Road, Batticaloa.
2. Thirugnanasampanthar Suresh, 136/A, Maddumage-watte Housing Scheme, High Level Road, Nugegoda.

Defendants

It was decreed and ordered in the above case by the District Court of Batticaloa on 15th March 2010 that the above named defendants pay to the Plaintiff balance amount until settlement in full together with cost of suit defendants have failed and neglected to pay the Plaintiff as decreed above.

I SHALL SELL BY PUBLIC AUCTION THE PROPERTY BELONGING TO THE 1ST DEFENDANT

Morefully described in the schedule hereto sequestrated in terms of the Sequestration Order made in this case, for the recovery of the above decreed amount

on 05th January 2011 at 2.00 p.m. at the spot.

SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO

An allotment of land depicted in Plan No : AS/ 96/1819 dated 05.01.1996 made by A. Singarajah Licensed Surveyor bearing Assessment No : 4 Lloyd's Avenue in the Village of Koddaimunai in Ward No. 10 within the Municipal Council Limits of Batticaloa in Mannunapattu in the District of Batticaloa Eastern Province and bounded on the NORTH by the premises of The Finance Company, on the EAST by the garden of the heirs of Selvanayagam, on the SOUTH by the garden of the heirs of Selvanayagam and on the WEST by Lloyd's Avenue and containing in extent Twelve Perches (A0-R0-P12) or 0.0303 Hectares and Registered under title B 566/251 at the District Land