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**RADIO AMATEURS
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ANTHOLOGY OF TSUNAMI COMMUNICATIONS - PART 1

A SPECIAL DERA CONFERENCE EDITION ADAPTED FROM THE WRC UPDATE NEWSLETTER

ON RESEARCHING THE ROLE OF HAMS...

A VERY THOROUGH MEDIA SEARCH HAS PRODUCED LIMITED INFORMATION IN ENGLISH ABOUT TSUNAMI RELATED HAM RADIO NEWS OUTSIDE OF INDIA AND THE WESTERN WORLD. THERE ARE A FEW WIDELY CIRCULATED AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE NEWS RELEASES THAT PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW.

ON THE OTHER HAND, DETAILED INFORMATION WAS UNCOVERED ABOUT THE WORK OF INDIAN HAMS AND CHARLIE K4VUD. EXCLUSIVE REPORTS WERE RECEIVED AND NUMER-

OUS MEDIA DISPATCHES ARE REPRODUCED HERE TO FORM AN ANTHOLOGY OF HAM TSUNAMI COMMUNICATIONS.

AS YOU READ ON, YOU WILL SEE THAT ALTHOUGH THERE ARE TEAMS, REPEAT "TEAMS", OF HAMS ON THE WORST-HIT ISLAND GROUPS, THE MEDIA HAS MADE TEAM LEADER AND SPOKESPERSON, BHARATHI PRASAD VU2RBI, THE SYMBOL OF ALL THAT IS GOOD ABOUT AMATEUR RADIO.

**TO BHARATHI, NIAR AND ALL THE TEAMS...
THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE!**

THE WORLD'S 4TH MOST DEADLY CATASTROPHE STRIKES THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION...

150,000 KILLED - 10,000s MISSING - MILLIONS HOMELESS

AT 0:58:50 UTC, ON SATURDAY DECEMBER 26TH, A 9.0 EARTHQUAKE OCCURRED NORTHWEST OF SUMATRA. THE IMMENSE ENERGY RELEASED RESULTED IN A TSUNAMI, A TIDAL WAVE, THAT REPORTEDLY REACHED HEIGHTS OF 40 FEET AND PENETRATED COASTLINES UPTO SEVERAL MILES. THAT TSUNAMI SPREAD DEATH AND DESTRUCTION THROUGHOUT THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM AND EVEN STRETCHED TO THE SHORES OF EAST AFRICA... 4,000 MILES AWAY. IT WILL BE NEAR THE TOP OF THE LIST OF THE WORLD'S WORST DISASTERS OF THIS CENTURY.

BECAUSE OF THE EXTREME MAGNITUDE OF THE



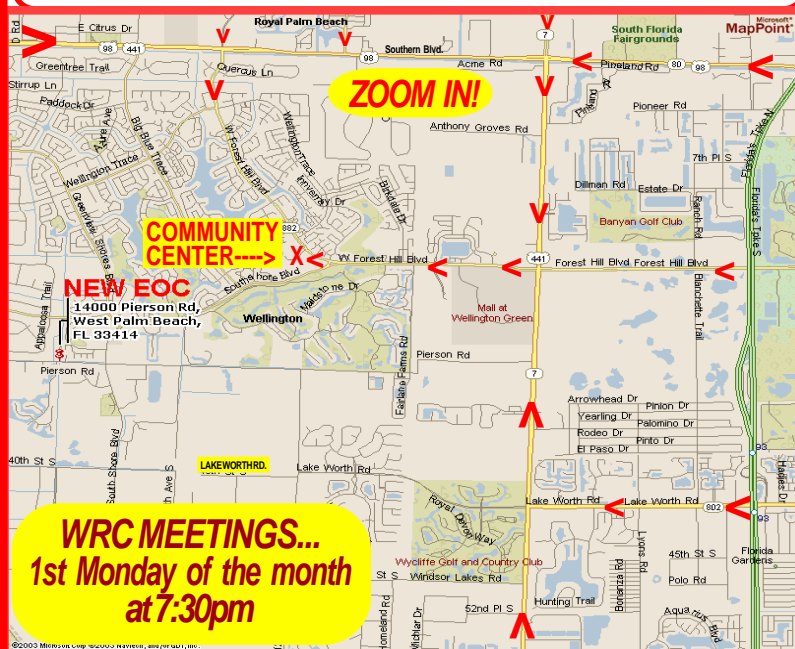
DISASTER, THE CASUALTY FIGURES ARE ONLY ESTIMATES. WHILE THERE IS VOLUMINOUS INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET, IT IS INCOMPLETE AT THIS MOMENT. NO DOUBT WHOLE BOOKS WILL BE WRITTEN ABOUT ALL ASPECTS OF THIS EVENT, BUT THIS **WRC UPDATE** EDITION WILL ONLY ATTEMPT TO FOCUS ON WHAT HAPPENED AND THE ROLE OF AMATEUR RADIO. THE NEXT **WRC UPDATE**, WILL LOOK AT THE NATURE OF TSUNAMIS AND WHETHER SUCH A DISASTER CAN HAPPEN HERE.



AN ANTHOLOGY OF HAM RADIO COMMUNICATIONS AFTER THE INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI

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IF YOU VISIT WELLINGTON... LET US KNOW!



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HELP US TO HELP NIAR... DERA AND WRC TO FUNNEL DONATIONS

HELP EMERGENCY COMMUNICATORS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION. WE CAN THINK OF NO BETTER WAY THAN TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AMATEUR RADIO OF INDIA, NIAR.

SINCE THE DEVASTATING 2001 EARTHQUAKE IN GUJARAT INDIA, WE HAVE TRACKED THIS GROUP'S EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES. THEY RESPONDED QUICKLY TO EVERY DISASTER THAT HAS BEFALLEN INDIA IN RECENT YEARS. AT THIS VERY MOMENT, THEY CONTINUE PROVIDING EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS FROM SOME OF THE MOST REMOTE AND DEVASTATED OF INDIAN TERRITORIES... THE ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS. YOU CAN READ ABOUT THEIR GREAT TSUNAMI COMMUNICATIONS WORK RIGHT HERE.

IT'S HARD FOR US, SITTING IN THE COMFORT OF OUR HOMES, TO APPRECIATE WHAT THEY ARE DOING... THEIR SACRIFICES AND THE CONDITIONS THEY FACE DAILY. IF YOU HAVE A STRONG STOMACH, GO TO THE LAST PAGE OF THIS ANTHOLOGY FOR A GLIMPSE OF WHAT THEY ARE FACING. YOU WON'T FIND A SIMILAR PHOTO IN THE MAIN-STREAM MEDIA.

NIAR MAKES UNCEASING EFFORTS TO PROMOTE HAM RADIO AND

ESPECIALLY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS THROUGHOUT INDIA. IT HAS NOT ONLY HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON INDIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS OFFICIALS, BUT ALSO HAS GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO FURTHER INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL PARTNERING WITH DERA AND MAINTAINING CLOSE TIES WITH PROGRESSIVE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS GROUPS SUCH AS THE WRC. PLEASE HELP THEM...

DERA DISASTER FUND

P.O. Box 280795

DENVER, CO 8022

-OR MAKE AN ONLINE CONTRIBUTION-

WWW.DISASTERS.ORG/DERA/DISASTERS.HTM

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GEORG SAMULKEWITCH KR4WD, TREASURER

12190 BROADLEAF COURT

WELLINGTON, FL 33414

ALL DONORS, REGARDLESS OF THE AMOUNT, WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED IN A FUTURE WRC UPDATE

WRC UPDATE EXCLUSIVE...

NEWS FROM SURI VU2MY AT NIAR HQ & SARA VU3RSB ON ANDAMAN ISLAND:

On Thursday evening the WRC Update Editor spoke directly to Chairman S. Suri VU2MY of NIAR by telephone. He confirmed the NIAR Team was safe and remained in the A&N Islands. Many of his comments are found in the email to DERA, page 4.

Suri wanted me to stress that the DXpedition logs are also safe and need to be transcribed to computer when emergency communications have ceased. The next morning I received an email and the photo to the right from Sara VU3RSB on Andaman Island. *Exclusive Andaman Island photo taken before the Tsunami - At the Hotel Sinclair perched high above the Indian Ocean are the VU4 DXpedition Team members: Prasad VU2DBP, Bharathi VU2RBI, Mohan VU2MYH, Varun VU2DVS & Update Correspondent Sara VU3RSB.*



WRC UPDATE EXCLUSIVE... LATE BREAKING NEWS FROM GOPAL VU2GMN:

"ANGEL OF THE SEAS" BHARATHI VU2RBI RETURNS TO MAINLAND INDIA AS ADDITIONAL HAMS PREPARE TO HEAD FOR THE ISLANDS

Wellington, FL Jan. 1, 2005: Gopal VU2GMN has reported via IRLP that he greeted Bharathi VU2RBI upon her return to mainland India. She arrived at the Chennai (Madras) Airport today at about 6 am EST.

He described VU2RBI as exhausted by the demands of non-stop emergency communications. Before the December 26th tsunami, she spent almost three weeks leading intense DXing operations to satisfy the needs of hams worldwide for a rare VU4 contact. Often she and her colleagues got only three hours sleep.

Bharathi planned to remain with the DXpedition through December 27th, the period authorized by the Indian Ministry of Communications & Information Technology. Her husband Prasad and children returned to Delhi after enjoying a week or so vacation on Andaman Island.

But the tsunami of the 26th caused the Team to immediately switch from DXpedition to emergency communications mode. Andaman Island is only a few hundred miles northwest of the earth-quake's epicenter and was severely hit by the tsunami.

Because of the outstanding work of the team, Bha-

rathi has been dubbed the "Angel of the Seas" by one correspondent and "Teresa of the Bay of Bengal" by another. (see dispatches elsewhere). In addition, VU2GMN reported that

hams from Hyderabad and Gujarat will be leaving shortly to join the original DXpedition team members and the NIAR members who flew with the military on the first flights to the Islands. Soon the VU emergency communications team should exceed 20 members supporting the relief efforts.



Bharathi VU2RBI, daughter Mahathi, son Varun VU3DVS and husband Prasad VU2DBP during trip to the Himalayas.

EMAILED REPORT FROM MR. SURI, DERA MEMBER AND
PRESIDENT OF NIAR (NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AMATEUR RADIO)
**UPDATE ON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS:
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS**

The district administration Chief, Car-Nicobar Island, spoke to me this morning to say (that) even now it is only the ham communication that is aiding them for relief and rehabilitation measures, and that he requested me to retain Mr. Rama Mohan VU2MYH (DERA member) and (the) other 5 hams who are in Car-Nicobar, the worst effected area.

Even the Indian Air Force base had suffered severely and lost men in the tragic Tsumani. Mr Charles Harpole K4VUD (SATERN member) was in Port Blair, Andaman, on the day of Tsumani and was residing just adjacent room to Bharathi in the same Hotel Sinclair in the 5 th floor at that time. Bharathi in fact was in communication with many USA/Japan hams minutes before earthquake and at the time of earthquake she was in contact with Thailand... the most affected place where lot of foreigners also died. She could inform that there was (a) severe earthquake before power went off. Immediately within half hour she forced the hotel management to start (the) standby supply generator and made contacts with my home as well many Indians and foreigners to (let them) know about (the) happenings, and the rise of sea water (providing) minute to minute details.

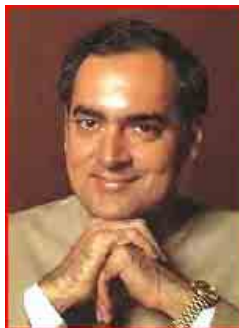
Rama Mohan rushed to the Chief of Administration and alerted them. This was at great risk to himself and other members as the road in which he had to travel was also hit by Tsunami waves later. Thus Ham (radio) could come to best rescue. We will acknowledge that the training he got from DERA in USA and certification by DERA has come handy in this major natural calamity in the world. Let everyone know about it in the world... please.

Thanks to Mrs. Sonia Gandhi who helped our team to be present in the Islands since 3rd December (and) came to (help) rescue(rs)... thus she is the real saviour of humanity. You may write a letter in these words appreciating her and the role played by NIAR and the Dera under your leadership.

Our teams are still sacrificing a lot and NIAR (is) at its best in the worst of situations providing emergency communications through Ham (radio). Our Chief Minister of A.P. (Anhandra Pradesh State) is fortunately is a friend of ours and he in turn introduced me to Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and made me to speak about the role played by us in the recent Tsunami. (The) PM is all praise for Hams in India and the entire world who helped us in this hour of need. Many stories are appearing



Sonia Gandhi, widow of VU2RG visited the Andaman Islands on Dec. 28th to boost the moral of the survivors.



Rajiv Gandhi VU2RG elected Prime Minister of India in 1984 and an inspiration to the ham community.



On the right track, NIAR lets officials know of their achievements. (L-R) Secretary K.K. Jaswal of India's Dept. of Information Technology talks to Australia over ECHOLINK while NIAR President S. Suri VU2MY observes & Sara VU3RSB operates the handheld.

of Ham support all over the world and that is good. But these stories do not say how much risk Rama Mohan and others took and how they are communicating from the very affected remote places. If they are recognized properly for their work and sacrifices that is good also for further strengthening Ham (radio) movement by NIAR/DERA together in India.

There are enough evidence with us to show in the form of e-mails received from some foreigners in Israel, Italy, etc to suggest how they got the information of their loved ones and their safety from Rama Mohan and others in Car-Nicobar and other Islands. Our staff member JOSE Jacob VU2JOS is in another remote Island hutbay and he is also doing very well. Only after 9 days other hams from the country could reach (the) Islands. It was only NIAR and only their team (that) was present (during the) initial 9 days.

I myself was there till 23rd and (then) had gone to Mumbai to attend a Ham vention, and was to go back to Port Blair on 26th and Tsumani did not help me to go there. Incidentally many newspapers in Islands published my lectures in (the) A&N Islands to say how Hams help in disaster and how it is useful to A&N Islands. This was between 20th & 23rd December and even Mr. Charles of USA was also present in these lectures which got published in electronic and press media of these effected Island(s). Thus these lectures also helped administration to take immediate help from NIAR team without further bureaucratic hurdles... Otherwise it could have been big miss.

I used to go on morning walk(s) regularly while in Port Blair between 6:30 to 9:00 AM on the beach as that was very beautiful... like in USA beaches. I feel that god prevented me not to return to Port Blair as Tsunami killed so many people. In fact i tried to go back on 25th itself and spent whole evening of (the) 24th in Mumbai airport to get a confirmed ticket which i could not manage. Frustrated I returned to Hyderabad thinking I will manage for 26th a ticket with the influence I could command from Hyderabad administration and the airline agent. If I had flown on 25th I could also have been found either in dead or missing list. My family is not able to reconcile to this god's grace till today. More in next e-mail. Very best regards to you, your XYL and the harmonic Suri
Email courtesy of Catherine Lawhun, DERA

PART OF THE \$350 MILLION IN US AID IS IN THE FORM OF ASSISTANCE FROM OUR MILITARY.
THE USS BENFOLD IS NOW PART OF A SIX SHIP NAVY FLOTILLA SPEARHEADED BY THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER ABRAHAM LINCOLN.
THE USS BENFOLD AND THE USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN CARRIER STRIKE GROUP...
DEPLOYED TO INDIAN OCEAN IN DISASTER RELIEF ROLE

WRITTEN BY DAVE NEUWEILER KI4DDX
AND COMPILED FROM INTERNET SOURCES

The USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group arrived in Hong Kong on Christmas Day for replenishment and Rest and Recreation before a planned deployment of the coast of North Korea. The carrier strike group includes the cruiser USS Shiloh, destroyers USS Benfold and USS Shoup, submarine USS Louisville, and support ship USS Rainier.

The Carrier Strike Group traveled about 1,600 miles from Hong Kong to Singapore, then traversed the Malacca Strait an additional 600 miles to Aceh, where it was reported on station three miles off the coast of Sumatra on New Year's Eve. U.S. Navy officials said that the Seventh Fleet is proud that the Lincoln Strike Group is the first to provide U.S. naval logistical support to the tsunami victims of Indonesia.

A spokesman said, "The Navy is determined to alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe resulting from the recent



(L-R) USS Abraham Lincoln anchored in Hong Kong with the sister ships USS Rainier, fast support ship, and USS Benfold, destroyer.

The stay in Hong Kong was cut short by the massive earthquake and subsequent tsunami in the Indian Ocean. Capt. William Anderson, a spokesman for the U.S. Pacific Command in Honolulu, said the Lincoln strike group sailed Dec. 27th from Hong Kong south to the Indian Ocean.

natural disaster, and that forward deployed units of the U.S. Seventh Fleet train for humanitarian assistance missions to rapidly respond as directed to support relief efforts."

Also in the flotilla is Larry Fields N6HPX/DU1. He is in the Merchant Marine working on board the USS Rainier. For the last 20 years or so he has lived in the Philippines and operated from a number of countries and vessels.

The strike group will provide whatever support is needed in both the short and long term. Currently, six helicopters from USS Lincoln are ferrying food and medical supplies from collection points in the Indonesian town of Banda Aceh to affected locations in Indonesia and returning with injured people so that they can receive medical attention.

In addition, the five surface ships of the group collectively can create about 750,000 gallons of fresh drinking water every day. This water can be pumped to shore from



Julia Neuweiler

Gunners Mate 2 Julia Neuweiler - on USS Benfold - had time to write a short message home as the strike group steamed south:

"Just wanted you all to know I'm safe and sound. I don't have to tell you anything about our mission, you simply have to watch CNN. We are unsure what our role is going to be, but many of us are eager to help. I don't think we'll be going to shore, probably just Search and Rescue, but whatever it is, we are ready. Everything will be fine. The crew and captain are confident. I will keep in touch as often as I can."

Lieutenant General James T. Conway, Joint Chiefs of Staff director of operations, told a briefing in Washington



Larry N6HPX/DU1



The flotilla is active around northwest Sumatra, upper left of map. Center: Choppers have flown hundreds of missions delivering food, water and medicine to residents in the devastated area. Right: Coastal farmers search for supplies left by chopper.

on Wednesday that the group "had 12 helicopters on board, which we find extremely valuable in these types of scenarios." According to press reports, by Friday there were about 50 US choppers in the region and the Benfold and her sister ships became floating gas stations for vital refills.

as far as two miles away.

Virtually all of the region's wells have been contaminated by the floodwaters, and the need for fresh, uncontaminated water to help prevent the spread of disease is critical. Desalinating wells has become a priority for ground teams.

WAVE OF DESTRUCTION, WAVE OF SALVATION... HAM RADIO OPERATOR ON A CHANCE VISIT TO A REMOTE INDIAN ISLAND BECOMES A LIFELINE

BY RAMA LAKSHMI

SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2005; PAGE D01



PORT BLAIR, India — About one month ago, Bharathi Prasad and her team of six young ham radio operators landed in this remote island capital with a hobbyist's dream: Set up a station and establish a new world record for global ham radio contacts. In the world of ham slang, it was called a "Dxpedition."

"It is a big honor to come to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and operate. There is no ham activity here because it is considered a very sensitive area by the Indian government," said Prasad, a 46-year-old mother of two from New Delhi.

In fact, the last ham activity in these scattered islands in the Bay of Bengal, 900 miles east of the Indian mainland, occurred in 1987, when Prasad set up a station in Port Blair and made 15,500 calls. "I had always wanted to come back and break that record," she said.

This time, Prasad set up an antenna in her hotel and turned Room 501 into a radio station. She made more than 1,000 contacts every day and said she operated "almost all day and all night, with just three hours of sleep."

In the early hours of Dec. 26, while the other hotel guests were fast asleep, Prasad's room was crackling with the usual squawks and beeps. At 6:29 a.m., she felt the first tremors of an earthquake. The tables in her room started shaking violently. She jumped up and shouted, "Tremors!" into her microphone. Then the radio went dead. She ran out and alerted the hotel staff and other guests.

But with that one word, she had alerted the world of radio hams, too.

Within a few hours, the extent of the damage was clear to everyone in Port Blair. But the tsunami had knocked out the power supply and telephone service of the entire archipelago of 500 islands, leaving the capital virtually cut off from the rest of India.

Undaunted, Prasad set up a temporary station on the hotel lawn with the help of a generator — and put the city back on the ham radio map.

"I contacted Indian hams in other states and told

them about what had happened. The whole world of radio hams were looking for us, because they had not heard from us after the tremors," she said later. "But I also knew this was going to be a big disaster. I immediately abandoned my expedition and told all radio operators to stop disturbing me. I was only on emergency communication from then on."

While news of the death and devastation caused by the tsunami in other parts of India was quickly transmitted around the world, the fate of the Andamans and Nicobars was slow to unfold.

Prasad kept broadcasting information about the situation to anyone who could hear her radio. Over and over, she repeated that there was no power, no water, no phone lines.

On Monday morning, she marched into the district commissioner's office and offered her services. "What is a ham?" he asked her. After she explained, he let her set up a radio station in his office, and a second one on Car Nicobar, the island hit hardest.

For the next two days, as the government grappled with the collapsed communication infrastructure, Prasad's ham call sign, VU2RBI, was the only link for thousands of Indians who were worried about their friends and families in the islands. She also became the hub for relief communications among officials.

"Survivors in Car Nicobar were communicating with their relatives in Port Blair through us," she said. When the phone lines were restored on Tuesday, Prasad's team in

Car Nicobar radioed information about survivors to her team in Port Blair, whose members then called anxious relatives on the

mainland to tell them that their loved ones were alive and well.

Prasad also helped 15 foreign tourists, including several from the United States, send news to their families. Offers of relief aid poured in from around the world through her radio, and she directed them to government officials. She also arranged for volunteer doctors to be sent from other Indian states.

Now she has become so popular in the islands, and in the ham world, that she said she has been affectionately nicknamed the "Teresa of the Bay of Bengal."

When the earthquake occurred, Prasad's worried husband called her from New Delhi and asked her to return home immediately.

"He reminded me that I have two children to look after back home," she said, laughing. "I told him that as a ham radio operator, I have a duty in times of disaster."

Under India's strict communications laws, a ham cannot leave home with his or her radio without going through an elaborate bureaucratic process to obtain permission from various ministries.

Prasad said that after her first expedition to Port Blair, she spent 17 years begging and badgering officials before she was allowed to return.

Now she hopes her work in the aftermath of the tsunami will ease the path for other hams in India.

"She looked like a simple housewife when she checked in," recalled Ravi Singh, the hotel manager in Port Blair. "But now I marvel at the courage she has shown."

...she has been affectionately nicknamed the "Teresa of the Bay of Bengal."

CHARLEY HARPOLE, K4VUD, WILL BE ON TOMORROW MORNING ON THE TODAY SHOW 7:00-8:00 AM WITH FIRST HAND ACCOUNT OF VU4 DXPEDITION AND TSUNAMI EMERGENCY OPS...

— ORIGINAL MESSAGE —

FROM: "BERNIE McCLENNY" <BERNIE@DAILYDX.COM>

TO: "THE DAILY DX MAILING LIST"

"THE WEEKLY DX MAILING LIST"

SENT: MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2004 8:00 PM

SUBJECT: ALL OK IN VU4 LAND !!!

Below is an update from K4VUD, Charley, who is now in Bangkok, Thailand. For those of you in the United States you will get an opportunity to see and hear a first hand account of Charley's story of the VU4 DXpedition Tuesday December 28th between 7:00 and 8:00 AM EST. Yes Charley will be interviewed by NBC and shown on the Today Show. Once we have the exact times from producer Sandy Rivera I will post them. Feel free to pass this on to your Amateur Radio friends. This should be great exposure as to the benefits of Amateur Radio! Find a blank video tape and be ready.

73

Bernie, W3UR

(EDITOR NOTE: Charlie did not appear on the Today Show but was interviewed on CNN).

Hello DXers...

Dec. 27 at 2300 Z, Bangkok - Hey, a whole lotta shakin' goin' on. Sorry to be out of touch for a while, but the phone service and thus email service went out with the first quake on Andaman, VU4. This is my first minute to get to a reliable email service.

1. Morning after Xmas, I was resting from sleep and thinking about what to do that coming day when my bed started to quiver like a large train was coming by. Then, the room started to rock about when I stood up. Walking and standing were difficult, bottles were falling off the shelves, and my fifth floor room floor felt like rubber. I got braced within the bathroom door until things settled down. Then, I found my pants and shirt and ran, shoes in hand, down the stairs and joined everyone else from the hotel in the open out front. Bharathi was already safely outside there. She was on the air at the time, but quickly figured out what was happening and got out.

2. There were extra holiday guests at the hotel. Various groups formed, and I sat with some English speakers at a table in the hotel garden. I noted to all who would listen that a BIG WAVE would come with an ocean quake. We were, by then, drinking tea and looking down on the ocean from about 80 feet above high tide. The sea rapidly turned brown near us, but there was no real surge. As the day went on and 8 to 10 more small tremors came and went, several of us took quick runs to our rooms to get necessities. The radios were left in the room. The roof antennas showed no signs of damage at all.

3. As the other team members came to our ho-

tel, we learned of the big wave that hit the water front in Port Blair. Saraha had taken some videos there with the water still about a foot deep over the street that fronted the ocean. All team members were very OK.

4. In the immediate Port Blair area, four people died (one from landing on his head as he dove out his home window seeking escape), the local newspaper reported.

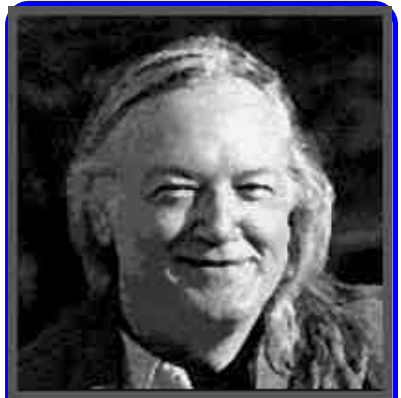
5. Port Blair and all but 4 of its citizens escaped serious damage. Most of you have now seen the video of the real damage that occurred in other places around the Indian Ocean rim... very bad for people and property.

6. By that afternoon, the team had set up one rig outside with a mobile whip and tuner...powered by the Hotel generator... and Bharathi was taking health and welfare messages from the people standing around there. Many wanted to tell relatives on the Indian mainland that they were ok, and Bharathi established contact with many India ham stations in various cities as needed. Traffic was being passed. She told my wife in Thailand that I was ok via contact with an HS station who passed the message by telephone in Thailand.... very nice to be a ham !

7. The team got cots from the hotel and, along with most others, slept out in the open that night. I slept fitfully near the lobby door on a couch inside, reasoning rightly this time, that the worst was over.

8. I will have more reports later, but the main news for ham radio is THE TEAM IS COMPLETELY OK AND SAFE. They have suspended normal DXpedition operations while helping out with health and welfare messages and whatever other duties may have come to them after I departed Port Blair vly early this morning (as I was originally scheduled to do). I suspect they will go back to DXpedition work soon because Port Blair escaped the worst damage and the after shocks apparently have also stopped.

Thanks for all the good wishes. 73 for now,
Charles Harpole
k4vud@hotmail.com



Charlie K4VUD has travelled extensively and held the callsigns HS0ZCW, 9N1UD and V26V. Dr. Harpole (Cinema Studies—Documentary Film) received his PhD from the NYU Film School. Before starting the Film Program at UCF, he was head of the Cinema Studies program at Ohio State University. He is the General Editor of the landmark ten volume series History of the American Cinema, published by Scribners. He has also written Gradients of Depth in the Cinema Image, and is working on a series of documentary films on the Buddhist Diaspora.

"Walking and standing were difficult, bottles were falling off the shelves, and my fifth floor room floor felt like rubber."

Orlando Sentinel

UCF PROFESSOR SURVIVES, RELAYS MESSAGES TO WORLD

BY RICH MCKAY | SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

POSTED JANUARY 1, 2005

The earthquake hit with the popping of concrete, screeching of twisting metal and the thudding sounds of bottles, books and bits of plaster falling from the shelves and walls of Charles Harpole's hotel room.

"I knew that I'd either be dead in a few seconds because the building would crash down or I'd get out and be fine," the vacationing University of Central Florida professor said early Friday. "There was that sense of finality."

Harpole and other members of a ham-radio club were just north of the quake's epicenter on the picturesque Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal between India and Thailand.

It was 6:30 a.m. Sunday, when Harpole was shaken from his bed to discover the walls of his room shaking and the floor turned to jelly.

"I was on the fifth floor, and it was difficult to walk because the floor was shifting. It was either too high or too low," he said in a telephone interview from the home of his wife's family in Samut Sakhon, Thailand.

Harpole said he knew the safest place to be was beneath a doorway, so he made his way to the bathroom doorway and held on for what seemed like six or seven minutes of shaking in the 9.0-magnitude earthquake.

When things finally settled, Harpole got dressed and fled the building, discovering to his joy that everyone in his party has escaped uninjured.

Because their hotel was on a high mountain ridge, Harpole said, it wasn't affected by the tsunami. But as he and his team realized the scope of the disaster, they set up their radio equipment and started relaying messages.

For about 20 hours, the ham operators -- sometimes using car batteries to run their radios -- were the main link between the remote Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the outside world, relaying information about survivors to anxious relatives and friends.

And with most telephone lines down and cell phones scarce, the ham-radio club's efforts proved invaluable as the scope of the disaster increased day after day.

The first messages were to let people on the Indian mainland know that those on the island were safe and unharmed.

A young waiter at Harpole's hotel asked them to get word to his mother in Hyderabad, India, that he was

alive and well.

"We found a ham-radio operator on the mainland, gave the mother's telephone number," Harpole said. Within five minutes a ham operator in Hyderabad called the waiter's mother and relayed the message.

"He told us the mother was crying with joy," he said.

Harpole's group cheered and clapped. Word spread quickly across the island, and their work went on for hours and hours.

When Indian government officials learned of the hamradio operators, they relayed messages for official requests for medicines, water and blankets. Several of the radio operators headed south to Nicobar.

Harpole decided it was time for him to head to Thailand for a reunion with his wife and her family who were safely inland.

"I was concerned, that this being an Indian operation and here I was this American, I should step aside," he said.

At his in-laws' house, he had his own radio equipment and has been relaying messages throughout Thailand, India and Sri Lanka.

"People are asking, 'Can you find so-and-so,' and so forth," he said.

Harpole, an amateur-radio enthusiast since he was 14, had been working for years with fellow enthusiasts in India to get permission to set up a station on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which consist of 572 islands, big and small, inhabited and uninhabited.

Amateur-radio buffs collect calls from geographic zones, trying to reach remote parts of the world and put pins in maps to mark the locations. But because of the Indian government's concern for security, a swath of the globe had been off-limits until Harpole and his friends persuaded the leaders to lift the ban.

About two weeks ago, Harpole and his friends arrived in the harbor town of Port Blair to set up the first ham-radio station and lounge on the tropical, white, sandy beaches.

It was an idyllic holiday until the quake hit.

Harpole, who founded the film program at UCF, expects to be back in Orlando soon. He said that the devastation throughout the Indian Ocean rim is hard to comprehend. The full toll may never be known. That's because many rural island and coastal villages never had a census, and "for some of those places, there isn't anyone left alive to say how many people had lived there," he said.

"Many islands were washed completely over from one side to the other. I've seen horrible, horrible destruction," Harpole said. "It's shocking beyond the telling. Piles of cars, broken buildings and boats where there used to be towns and people. The stories from people being hit by the wave -- so unexpected. People having coffee, and then they're gone."

...the devastation throughout the Indian Ocean rim is hard to comprehend...

HAM RADIO TO THE RESCUE IN TSUNAMI-HIT ANDAMAN

By Hindol Sengupta,
Indo-Asian News Service

Port Blair, Jan 2 (IANS) When tsunami waves broke all communication lines across India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands, ham radio came to the rescue.

Bharati Prasad, India's foremost amateur ham radio operator, was attempting a new transmission record here when the Dec 26 earthquake followed by the giant waves hit the archipelago.

Faced with a massive humanitarian crisis - with hundreds dying and islands with thousands of people completely out of reach - Prasad quit her project and jumped into action.

"In situations like this, the only thing that works is radio," said Prasad, one of the 20,000 Indian ham radio operators - people who run powerful radio transmission sets connecting with fellow enthusiasts across the world.

"The phone links had disappeared, so I started using my radio set to connect with people in mainland (India) and giving information about people in Port Blair.

"In fact, I was one of the first people to get in touch with a radio guy in Thailand who told me what was happening there barely minutes after the waves hit (the beach town of) Phuket."

More than 700 people are confirmed dead and hundreds still missing in the Andamans a week after the tsunami ravaged coastlines across Asia, killing more than 120,000.

Sitting in the room in the Port Blair hotel - two cracks near the door bear ugly testimony of the quake - Prasad spoke about how the first people who used her facility were bellboys and bearers at the hotel.

"There was nothing else. There was some talk of satellite phones but that was way beyond their reach. This was free," smiled Prasad, 46, looking like a mother who is a little harried, in her brown cotton sari and thinning black hair tied in a small bun.

"They brought me slips of paper which had the names and the phone numbers of their family members and I asked by radio contacts in Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai to make phone calls and tell them that their boy is safe," she said.

So impressed were local administrators by her work that she has been asked to set up eight radio centres throughout the region, including remote, and worst-affected, islands like Car Nicobar and Campbell Bay.

"The radios are really helping us," said Andaman police chief S. B. Deol. "There are providing invaluable information about conditions around the islands - who needs what, where.

"Now within a day or two 15 radio operators (from the National Institute of Amateur Radio in Hyderabad) are coming here and we would be dispatching them to the remote islands. They will be our connectivity points."

Prasad, who goes by the codename VU2RBI in the three million worldwide radio fraternity, has been an enthu-



Goodwill "ambassador" Bharathi VU2RBI at the Connecticut DX Association during 1987 visit Stateside. Bharathi is well known in DX circles for expeditions and operating skills.

siast for more than 25 years.

"I am a science graduate who got interested in ham radio because my sister and brother-in-law used to do it," said Prasad, whose 15-year-old son is one of the world's youngest radio operators.

"I got my licence after a couple of years and, since then, this has been the primary thing in my life. It wasn't easy getting the licence; you have to clear electronics tests and then get home ministry security clearance.

"I was one of the first women in India to get a licence.

This time, Prasad had come to Port Blair - the first person in 17 years to get permission to do radio work here - to get a record of contacting more than 35,000 people around the world through her radio set.

"We wanted to know how connected radio could be even at a (remote) place like the Andamans."

But all that changed with the tsunami. "Obviously disaster relief first," said Prasad.

"In fact, I believe that the ham radio was invented to help in crises like this when nothing else works."

newkerala HAM CONTACT NUMBERS
Kerala Presence on the Web **FOR ANDAMANS SEARCH:**

[India News]: Kolkata, Jan 1 : Amateur Radio Operators have been helping in tracing the dead and providing information on the missing in calamity hit Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

An official release said here today those seeking information on their near and dear ones in the worst-hit island territory, may contact Ambarish Nag-Biswas@computerraju (Res no: 2563 8383) and Indranil Majumdar (Res no: 2440 6960) -- two HAM operators in Kolkata coordinating with 15 counterparts in the islands.

To get in touch with the HAM volunteers, the India code or Kolkata code (91-033) as applicable from other locations should be dialled first.

These volunteers, it said, had proved 'very useful' during the search and relief operations in Gujarat earthquake and the Orissa cyclonic storm,

CIVILIAN RADIOS IN RELIEF ROLE

NISHA LAHIRI

NAME: NILANJAN MAJUMDAR

CALL SIGN: VU2HFR (HOTEL FOXTROT ROMEO)

HANDLE (RADIO NICKNAME): HOREY

Calcutta Jan 3 - Majumdar is part of the search and relief operation that is in progress in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. He is doing his bit, right here from Calcutta, high frequency radio (for long distances) in hand. His home in Ballygunge is one of only about two HAM (amateur radio) stations in Calcutta, being used by licensed amateur radio operators keen to help.

The other is by VU2GMT, a Dr Ashish Biswas from Joka. Majumdar and five others, including octogenarian and disaster veteran after the Orissa cyclone Deepak Mitra, Arya Ghosh, Sunil Das and secretary of the Calcutta VHF Amateur Radio Society Nikhilesh Sinha, have been manning the station from December 27, relaying information to and fro, even helping locate the missing.

"Most of the traffic has been about emergency relief information, to the stations in Andamans and also to the Red Cross. But we have been able to relay a few personal messages," says Majumdar.

The only two civilian radio stations in Port Blair were set up by a HAM team from the National Institute of Amateur Radio in Bangalore, on an expedition to the island from December 3.

"It's the first time since 1987 that civilians have been allowed to have radio communications from Andamans. When the disaster struck, they immediately turned to emergency operations, the only ones apart from the defence people," adds Majumdar.

After special government permission, two from the seven-member team set up operations in Car Nicobar, too. On Sunday, a team of 14 — nine from Gujarat, five from Bangalore — arrived in Port Blair and will make their way to some of the more remote islands that remain isolated, after delivering supplies to the other team, like batteries for radios.

Back in Calcutta, the team is under pressure. There is a lack of manpower and the calls have been flooding in. While K. Nanu, armyman Rajesh Kumar and Banabir Chakraborty have been found safe and their relatives informed, the Pyne family is missing, as is a group of 13 holidaymakers. Plus, there is a lack of funding to actually travel to the affected areas to help out.

But the effort is a well-coordinated one, spanning the region, several countries and hundreds of amateur radio operators. There are people from Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and even Australia lending their support by relaying information across the frequencies.

"Sometimes, the signal to a station fails because it depends on weather. But, for instance, if we can't contact Car Nicobar to ask about relief supplies and a radio operator from Sri Lanka can, then he relays the message to them and then back to us," adds Arya Ghosh.

For help, call 2460 3433

RADIO LIFELINE FOR STRICKEN ISLANDS

JAYANTA GUPTA

SUNDAY, JANUARY 02, 2005 11:11:54 PM

KOLKATA: It is sheer providence that a team from the National Institute of Amateur Radio was in the Andamans on an expedition when the Tsunami struck on December 26. And even more providential that Port Blair's first HAM radio station got operational on December 15 - the 1987 bar on amateur radio operators was lifted last year.

Within hours of the tragedy, two stations had been set up at Port Blair and one more at Car Nicobar. Conventional communication links between the islands and the mainland having been snapped, these amateur radiomen turned out to be the only hope for thousands of marooned survivors. Now, a direct control room has been set up in Kolkata which acts as a relay centre between the islands and the rest of the country. "It is easier to reach Kolkata by radio from the Andamans.

We are relaying messages for the administration and relief organisations, such as the International Red Cross. A number of personal requests are also coming in from people whose relatives are still missing. We are doing our best to locate them but it is very difficult to trace individuals as we lack the manpower and the means. We have succeeded in helping out only 15-20 per cent of those approaching us with such requests," admits Indranil Majumdar of the Calcutta VHS Amateur Radio Society.

However, they have managed to provide accurate information about the state of affairs on individual islands. "Many have asked us to find out about the situation on a particular island. We have been able to tell them whether that island has been affected or not," Mukherjee added. According to him, 14-15 amateur radiomen will be soon leaving Chennai for the Andamans to set up additional stations at Little Andamans and other islands.

He thinks that the situation will be slightly better then and personal queries can be addressed. Normally, no amateur radio licence is issued for the Andaman and Nicobar Islands due to their strategic location. However, in international circles, the islands continue to remain an important radio address. "The last expedition had been to the Andamans in 1987.

The home ministry does not allow radio transmission from the Andamans. A team from NIAR began their expedition from December 1, 2004, but it was cut short by the Tsunami. Teams were then created to set up the stations at Port Blair and Car Nicobar," Majumdar said.

In the past, the amateur radiomen have performed wonders, particularly during the Bhuj earthquake and the supercyclone in Orissa. Every year during the Gangasagar Mela in South 24-Parganas, these radiomen continue to remain the backbone of communication.

"For the Andamans, we have set up an emergency net and have kept the 20-and 40-metre bands open. The telephone number of the direct control room is 24603433. Amateur radio stations in Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad are connected to a Delhi-based Ham operator.

HAMS LEND A HELPING HAND

AMATEUR HAM RADIO ENTHUSIASTS ARE PLAYING AN UNUSUAL BUT IMPORTANT ROLE IN TSUNAMI RELIEF WORK, REPORTS SHONALI MUTHALALY

When four amateur radio operators headed to the Andaman and Nicobar islands a few weeks ago, armed with only basic equipment, backpacks and sun blocks, they had no idea that their fun hobby would soon become the islands' only lifeline.

"They went because it's a 'high value' country for hams (amateur radio operators) since you need special permission from the Government to operate there," says Gopal Madhavan, an avid ham and one of the members of the governing council of the Amateur Radio Society of India. "The last time a ham operated in the Andamans was about 25 years ago."

The team, which came from across India, left Chennai on December 3 on their 'DXpedition' (basically ham slang for an expedition to any foreign country). "They met here for a cup of tea before they left... There was a great amount of enthusiasm," says Gopal, carefully tuning his buzzing radio, alive with their voices crackling all the way from the islands. "They went to Port Blair, set up the equipment — all DXpeditions carry radios and dismantled antennas, which can be set up later with guy ropes — and contacted about 35,000 hams across the world."

Then, the earthquake began, followed by tidal waves, which swept over the small islands.

"They were actually in operation when the tremors began. Bharathi, the team leader, was talking to an Australian on the radio. He says her voice suddenly rose by a few octaves and she yelled 'tremor'. Then, her radio went dead."

The islands were devastated by the quake and crashing waves. Phones died, the electricity went out and life in Andaman and Nicobar came to a stunned halt. On the airwaves too, there was a loud silence, as hams across the world held their breath, wondering whether the team had survived. However, about two hours later, unbelievably, they were back on the air.

"Every other form of communication was down. They were the only link from the Andamans to the mainland for several hours after the disaster," says Gopal, adding that the tsunamis had engulfed the island, paralysing all machinery and communication systems. The ham radio however, which was operating from a tower, was in working order, although the team did have to scavenge for batteries to get it operating again since it had been running on electricity.

In the tradition of hams, the team stayed on to help, the DXpedition was converted into an emergency



Rising to the occasion: Gopal Madhavan VU2GMN. He operates the only IRLP node, 8900, in India. Pics by K.V. Srinivasan

network and hams from across the world, especially India, swung into action. Two more people headed to the islands to support the emergency network, and with help from the Indian Army, which is providing the hams with food, camping and batteries, the station on Port Blair continues to operate, while another station has been set up at Car Nicobar, which has been practically obliterated by the catastrophe.

Hams have time and again proved useful in situations like this where communication lines are down and emergency services have their hands full. "The police have to concentrate on law and order at this point, while the Army and emergency services have specific roles to play. Roles they cannot really deviate from be-

cause they have so much work to do," says Gopal.

He says they are often called upon

by the Government to lend a helping hand since they are a mobile, usually well-connected, civilian group. Hams can set up radio stations even from their cars, travel around affected areas, identify people who need help and radio the police or hospitals. They can also mobilise men and materials since they have a vast network of millions of people from all walks of life, which covers the world. Port Blair, for instance, has just asked for 12 doctors so the hams are calling hospitals for help. "And while we co-ordinate from here, the ham control station in Delhi is talking to the Government to see if they can spare doctors," says Gopal.

Right now the main concern of the Andaman team is to find missing people. "We are getting calls from all over the world from people who are worried about friends and relatives," says Gopal. The teams in the islands field these calls, ask where the missing person was last seen and send people out to look for them. "However, with disasters like this, it is extremely difficult to find people since the tendency is to flee. What we can say is... well... if someone's dead and the body's been found," says Gopal. "We then radio back the news so that relatives are informed. (pause) That's been happening a lot."

Meanwhile, in Tamil Nadu, although the State Government has said they have the situation under control, hams from across South India are being

Bharathi, the team leader, was talking to an Australian on the radio. He says her voice suddenly rose by a few octaves and she yelled 'tremor'. Then, her radio went dead."

HAMS LEND A HELPING HAND - CONTINUED

mobilised anyway, to help in whatever ways they can. They have established stations in Vellankani, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Kanyakumari, Pondicherry and Thanjavur and have also set up control stations in the bigger cities, like Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata and Delhi. Gopal mans the Chennai station. His role is to co-ordinate rescue efforts and help transfer information, since most of the emergency ham stations work on batteries to save power and use long wire antennas, generally tied to a tree, and are hence relatively feeble. "Mobilising people has taken a while," says Gopal, "We have to find people with diesel cars because petrol vehicles don't work in water. We need people who drive Scorpios or Mahindra jeeps so they can travel with all the ham equipment and supplies."

In Sri Lanka too, the hams have moved to the East Coast, which has been devastated. Since there are very few hams there, hams from India are now being mobilised to travel to the island. Meanwhile, the radio waves have been inundated by people calling in to offer help. "Hams worldwide are getting involved. The Canadian hams are in the process of sending blankets, bed sheets and cooking utensils," says Gopal, "Everybody's offering aid. Everybody wants to help."

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

In Gujarat, for 10 days after the 2001 earthquake, hams were the only people who could communicate effectively. A number of them drove straight to Gujarat when they heard about the tragedy, using car batteries to power their radios so they could call for help whenever they found victims or unclaimed bodies.

Every time there's a cyclone, an air crash or disasters in open fields where communication is difficult, hams are called upon for help since their mobile radio systems always work. Often, one ham is stationed at the district collector's office, just so he can talk to the authorities.

Over the years, many hams have lost their lives when serving during disasters. Deepa, a young lady who went to Gujarat to help out, picked up a disease there and died. More recently, a Sri Lankan ham, who was in Iraq on a peace keeping mission as part of the UN group for communications, was shot dead.

HAMSTRUNG

Although hams have helped the government a number of times in emergency situations, red tapism is slowly choking amateur radio as a hobby. The laws, which were laid down in the days of the British Raj, are apparently "ridiculously outdated" today. For instance, according to the law, a ham can't leave home with his radio. Hence, ironically, every time they head out to help with disaster management, they're actually breaking the law.

However, last month, the Home Department and Ministry of Communication had a meeting in Delhi with the Amateur Radio Society of India, which seemed to finally acknowledge the efficacy of ham radio. The society submitted a paper asking for changes and has been told that it's been studied and the "departments concerned are looking into the issues."



DELHI WOMAN IS ANDAMAN'S 'ANGEL OF THE SEAS'

BY PRATAP CHAKRAVARTY

Port Blair Dec. 31, 12:39 - A Delhi woman in the Andaman islands has become the centre of a multi-nation effort by ham operators to unite thousands of families separated by the killer waves. The Andamans account for about a third of India's reported death toll of 11,330 but thousands more are missing or have been separated from families in the archipelago's 572 islands because of massive damage to harbours, bridges and local ferry services.

A grateful Indian army is supporting 46-year-old Bharti Prasad with gear and batteries as the Delhi-based housewife has networked ham operators across the nations to reunite families and help in relief and rescue operations.

Ham radio buffs had not been permitted to operate in the Andamans since 1987 but the ban was lifted in November. Prasad was among the first to arrive to help establish a radio footprint in the string of islands near Thailand.

"We arrived here on December 15 to support Andamans as a radio country ... Amateur stations across the world wanted a footprint in these beautiful islands," Prasad told AFP in the capital of Port Blair.

"I did not expect a disaster like this. It is no longer a game and now we must help," Prasad said as her headset crackled with tsunami-related traffic from a high-frequency radio band spanning three megahertz to 30 megahertz.

"When the tidal waves struck, we just turned the beacon towards India and since then, we have been flooded with messages which we relay on local telephone lines," she said.

"Hams have also advertised in newspapers asking people to get in touch with us, and in that way, we are uniting families broken up by Sunday's waves," added Prasad. She has already handled around 30,000 emergency calls since disaster struck the tropical paradise.

"The only thing I am now afraid of is our telephone bill," said Prasad.

Mothers were separated from their children and husbands from their wives in the desperate scramble to escape the killer waves. Further chaos ensued when rescuers randomly plucked survivors from islands and sent them to special shelters.

"I thought I had lost my family but soon an official told me that he had received messages from a 'radio station' that all my relatives were safe in Port Blair," said survivor Roby Dey in the devastated island of Car Nicobar.

The "radio station" was none other than Prasad, a military rescuer said in Car Nicobar. Amateur stations

This story describes the desperation on Teresa Island before the arrival of a ham team... it's in the A&N group and is probably typical of the distress found all over the Indian Ocean region.

Getting information out to relief decisionmakers is vital... and that is where amateur radio shines.

The Indian **EXPRESS**

WANTED: A MOTHER TERESSA

THE REFRAIN HERE: 'CAN YOU TELL PEOPLE IN PORT BLAIR WE NEED WATER, OIL, HALOGEN LAMPS, BLEACHING POWDER, CHLORINE TABLETS. NOBODY'S LISTENING'

SOURAV SANYAL

TERESSA ISLAND, JANUARY 4 - Curious faces gather around the chopper as it touches down at Teresa island, about 380 km from Port Blair.

Within minutes, the number swells. And then, the stories unfold—of lack of food, drinking water, officials 'deserting' the scene, and the hovering threat of a malaria outbreak.

Stretched to the limit, the relief camp residents say they are now going to set up another camp on their own, near the only water source in the island—a stagnant pond.

Says Harold, one of the 3,600 nameless faces stranded here: "Babu, have you got something for us? There is no dal and edible oil. If you don't give us food, we won't be able to survive this."

Says Sub-Inspector Sushil Nair, who was posted on the island when the killer waves struck: "The conditions are terrible. No district administration official has bothered to come here and enquire about our needs. No effort has been made to restore water supply. The Assistant Commissioner of Nancowrie arrived yesterday but he said his primary task is to evacuate people. But what's the point in thrusting more and more people into camps when there are no basic amenities?"

Nair's colleague Abdul Rashid says he's being trying hard to restore radio communication in the battered island. "Health authorities are brainstorming on ways to tackle the outbreak of diarrhoea and malaria. Have they ever bothered to find out what's happening here? We are trying to purify the little stock of water we have in our own small way. But that's hardly adequate," he says.

Rashid says the waves left him with only a vest and an underwear, which he has been wearing for the last 10 days. "The Defence people came to drop food material. But what is the point in dumping bags of rice when you don't have utensils to prepare food? We have only four degchis. How can we prepare food for everyone, especially with the acute shortage of edible oil and fuel," says Rashid.

Trudging away from the crowd, along a meandering pathway with asbestos sheets and a few broken

wooden blocks slung on his shoulders, is Judicus who managed to survive the waves by running on to a hillock.

"We thought we'd tell the administration to arrange for an alternative but then the wait's become too much. It's been 10 days and now we will try to put up a camp on our own, about two kilometers from here. We selected that place as it has the only water source, a stagnating pond," he says.

Suddenly, a wail cuts through the complaints. "My child is running a high fever, please do something," cries Surmai, with folded hands.

Her only hope: Dr Michael, stranded along with the rest.

"Whenever I get a complaint, I try to give whatever medicines are available. But I

badly require antibiotics and antimalarial drugs. There are quite a number of cases of fever and respiratory distress. Since mosquitoes abound here, we are expecting a malaria outbreak. I have sent requisitions through wireless but nothing has arrived. The hospital building has been completely washed out. I urgently need more supporting staff," says Dr Michael.

The situation is likely to get worse, he warns, as more people are likely to be shifted here from the Chowra island nearby.

Spread over 101.4 sq km, Teresa is one of the 12 islands of the Nicobar archipelago. Part of the ancient India-Burma sea trade route, the island was home to about 2,000 persons—over 388 households as per the last Census—till last week.

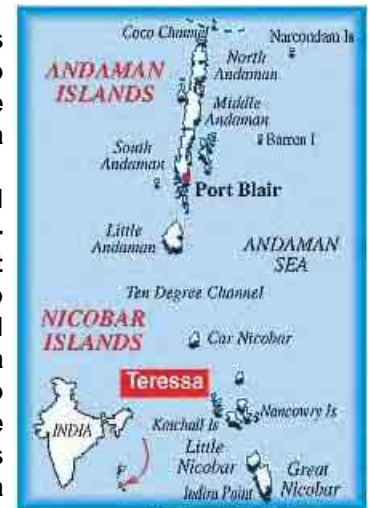
Although the Andaman and Nicobar district administration pegs the death toll at one and the missing tally at 52, those in camps say at least 42 have died and 11 are missing.

Says longtime resident, Ignatius: "The PWD building, the hospital, the school have all collapsed. There is no water, no electricity. Can you tell people in Port Blair that we need halogen lamps, bleaching powder, DDT, or chlorine tablets. Today, the entire settlement has been reduced to a virtual graveyard. We have buried many dead bodies here."

As the chopper readies to take off, Rashid comes running. "Some of the first persons to leave the island after the tragedy were three government officials: two engineers and a senior doctor. We pleaded and asked them to stay back but they chose to desert us," he cries out.

Then, after the chopper takes off, we give Teresa island one last look. There's a temple floating in deep sea. Literally.

URL: http://www.indianexpress.com/full_story.php?content_id=62087



IE Map/B.K. Sharma

The dispatch announcing the arrival of ham teams on Teressa Island. Their mission: to transmit the information needed by disaster relief authorities at Port Blair's emergency management headquarters.

AHMEDABAD **Newsline**
cities.expressindia.com

HAM OPERATORS SEND RIGHT SIGNAL

BASHIR PATHAN

Gandhinagar, January 4: HAM operators from Gujarat are certainly sending out the right signals. After doing their bit during the temblor that rocked the State, emergency communication teams of HAM radio operators from the State landed on Campbell Bay and Teressa island of the Andaman and Nicobar on Monday — the worst-hit spots in the December 26 tsunami — and opened the lines of communication.

Two of three teams have set up stations, one each at the government circuit house and at the Air Force base at Campbell Bay. Their brief: keep the Port Blair authorities abreast of the latest situation vis a vis ration, drinking water and medicines so that tsunami victims get the help they need.

The teams, comprising three members each, are armed with two high frequency (HF) HAM sets, two VHF sets, six hand-held VHF equipment and antennae.

The third team left Port Blair for Teressa island on Monday by a naval aircraft and is expected to reach the worst-hit spot later tonight. "The team equipped with two HF sets, one VHF set and three hand-held VHF and antennae will set up its station on the island by tomorrow morning and establish communication with the Port Blair authorities engaged in relief and rescue work", Chairman of the Gujarat Institute of Amateur Radio (GIAR) S K Nanda told The Indian Express on Tuesday.

A senior IAS officer and secretary in the State Civil Supplies department, Nanda said that leaders of all the three teams, which reached Port Blair on Sunday last, had held a meeting with the deputy commissioner of Andaman and Nicobar and worked out a plan on where and how to work. Several other HAM teams from different parts of the country that reached Port Blair were also invited to the meeting.

A Gandhinagar-based HAM operator Gyanesh Raval, who has been in constant touch with the team leaders, said that when the Port Blair authorities chose the farthest corners of the A&N islands for the three teams, they readily agreed to operate from there. Most of the HAM teams from other parts of the country re-

Two of three teams have set up stations, one each at the government circuit house and at the Air Force base at Campbell Bay. Their brief: keep the Port Blair authorities abreast of the latest situation vis a vis ration, drinking water and medicines so that tsunami victims get the help they need.



Hams from the State of Gujarat have joined the NIAR teams. They have extensive emergency communications as a result of their 2001 earthquake disaster which killed 25,000 and made 1,00,000 homeless. At that time, NIAR sent teams to assist them.

portedly declined to go to Campbell Bay and Teressa island.

Campbell Bay is about 540 km from Port Blair, while Teressa island is about 470 kms from the A&N Capital. Since the local authorities are still struggling to restore com-

munication network in these two worst-affected places, they suggested that Gujarat teams operate from there, Raval said.

Another Gandhinagar-based HAM operator V R Toliya is camping at Port Blair, coordinating with the three teams and helping local officials posted at the relief control room there. A PI with Gandhinagar LIB, Toliya also maintains links with the Gujarat Government.

"I have also been in touch with my colleagues operating from far-flung corners of the Andaman and Nicobar islands. After communicating with them on my HAM set, I convey to their relatives in Gandhinagar that they are safe on the tsunami-hit islands", says Raval, an employee working in the Sachivalaya, adding, "The latest communication that I had with P C Valera based at Campbell Bay was 9.55 tonight".

Most of the HAM radio team members who left for the A&N islands on Friday last are government employees such as P C Valera, H R Trivedi, P G Purohit, K K Patel, Vithal Ajmera, Satyanarayan Kahar, Ashish Patel, Dharmendra Trivedi and Kanubhai Patel. Team leader Valera is PSI at the Gandhinagar SP headquarters and founder of the GIAR that had been set up in the State Capital immediately after the killer earthquake in Gujarat.

WARNING!!! THE PHOTO BELOW IS VERY DISTURBING...
IT IS OF A HOTEL BEACH COVERED WITH TSUNAMI VICTIMS.
IF YOU DON'T REACT WELL TO DEATH SCENES ...
DO NOT LOOK AT IT!

Source: EarthChangesTV.com

Unlike a horror movie, this scene is real. Among the hundreds of tsunami photos viewed, this one from Sri Lanka is probably the most visually descriptive the Editor has seen so far.

We can only imagine that this scene is representative of the *ten thousand* miles or so of destroyed coastline where there were dense populations. It isn't until you zoom-in that you realize it is a carpet of humanity.

PUBLISHING THIS PHOTO HAS BEEN WORTHWHILE:

...if it has changed your image of the catastrophe,

...if it dispelled any disbelief about the scale of the tragedy,

...if it confirmed the need for huge amounts of assistance,

...if it made you think about a personal preparedness plan for your family,

...if it motivates you to learn about CERT, RACES or ARES, or

...If it loosens your purse strings.

We encourage you to help tsunami victims in any way you can. There have been many worthy organizations that have sought donations for disaster relief work.

As announced on page 3, DERA and the Wellington Radio Club will funnel any donations received to the Indian *National Institute of Amateur Radio*. NIAR is a DERA Partner organization is known to **WRC UPDATE** readers for their ongoing promotion of Amateur Radio, training of new operators, aggressive positive publicity and, especially, for being in the field whenever emergency communications are needed.

