

✧ METROPOLIS CITY NEWS ✧

Friday, December 27, 2004

Special Edition

TSUNAMI WREAKS HAVOC

After Reading

1. What is a natural disaster?

2. Give three examples of a natural disaster.

3. Why do you think a natural disaster is sometimes referred to as “an act of God”?

4. A simile is a comparison of two things using the words like or as (e.g., “her city looked like a huge dumpster after the tsunami”). Use a simile to describe the aftermath of a car accident.

5. Circle the word that matches the meaning of the boxed word in each sentence.

The skiing trip into the mountains turned into a real **disaster**.

- a) rally b) triumph c) tragedy d) celebration

More than 400 people **perished** in the incident.

- a) died b) were injured c) were misplaced d) came together

The mysterious piece of **debris** from the barge was invaluable.

- a) carriage b) treasure c) statue d) junk

The table was **sturdily** built.

- a) hurriedly b) solidly c) sloppily d) shoddily

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Earthquake in Indian Ocean Triggers Devastating Tidal Waves

By John Smith

In the early morning of December 26, 2004, an earthquake off the coast of Indonesia set off a chain of events with devastating results.

The earthquake, located in the depths of the Indian Ocean, triggered a series of tidal waves, some reaching heights of 80 feet (25 meters).

The word tsunami is from the Japanese language meaning harbor wave. A tsunami can reach speeds of almost 500 miles per hour and can travel many miles before wreaking destruction. In 1960, an earthquake off the coast of South America started a tsunami that killed 150 people in Japan –10,000 miles away.

The Indonesian tsunami was responsible for the deaths of about 300,000 people. They were killed when the tidal waves swept inland on Indonesia and neighboring countries. Many of these people were tourists visiting from Canada and the United States. Although citizens from about 55 countries were killed, over 200,000 Indonesians are believed to have perished. The destruction is thought to have affected over five million people, with over a million left homeless.

The tsunami which happened off the coast of Indonesia was the worst ever recorded. It is uncommon for tsunamis to occur in this region,

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because earthquakes are quite rare in the Indian Ocean area. Only seven have been recorded in the past century. These monster waves are more common in the Pacific Ocean, where there were 17 tsunamis between the years 1992 and 1996, taking 1700 lives.

Why do you think it is so difficult to survive a tsunami?



Most of the people caught in the Indonesian tsunami had little warning that disaster was close at hand. It was a beautiful, sunny day and the local people and thousands of tourists were enjoying the warm weather.

Tourists staying at a hotel in the country of Sri Lanka tell of watching from their second floor hotel room as a huge tidal wave came crashing ashore. It was so powerful that in seconds it reduced the first floor of the hotel to matchsticks. Some fortunate people were driven to safety on high ground before the next wave came crashing in.

One witness saw mothers with small babies trying to escape the wave, then saw the small babies being swept from their mothers' arms and washed out to sea.

Another witness from Europe told of being warned by the local people that a "killer wave" was sweeping in on the village. Although she escaped, her brother-in-law and parents were swallowed up by the wave. Her aunt ran to a nearby hotel but was submerged by the wave, which tore into the building. She was saved because she managed to grasp a table that was floating nearby.

In nearby Thailand, tourists spoke of



Map showing countries directly affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake, which caused the deadliest tsunami in recorded history.

sunbathing and snorkelling, when suddenly they were warned by their guides that a "big wave" was coming. So they ran for their lives up the beach, barely managing to escape. They saw empty speedboats and fishing boats flying along the top of the water at incredible speeds, driven along by the fierce wave.

Many people, however, were not as fortunate. The local people living in the regions of devastation were especially hard hit. Many in these areas live in dwellings that are not sturdily built and unable to withstand a huge wall of water like a tsunami.

After the waves passed through, many areas were unbelievable sights. Dead bodies were everywhere. Experienced news reporters wept on camera as they described to their viewers

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what had happened. One reporter described her city as looking like a huge dumpster.

Many are saying that this natural disaster was the worst that has ever happened in the history of the world. Never before have so many people perished as a result of one natural event. We may never know the exact number of people killed.

Many of the world's countries, including the United States and Canada, rushed to the aid of the stricken nations. Food and emergency supplies were flown to the region as well as relief workers. Agencies like the Red Cross collected donations for relief. Musicians around the world planned concerts to raise money to help out.

Many of the countries devastated by the 2004 tsunami have come under severe criticism for not having a warning system for such an event. As a result governments are now working at putting into place a means of warning people of such an impending disaster. May we never again experience a tragedy of this magnitude.

How else might the people of these countries be helped to recover from this disaster?



Although it might seem unlikely that you will ever be caught in a tsunami, remember that many of the people killed in this disaster were foreign tourists. In case you are ever caught in the middle of such a disaster, here are a few things that might keep you alive:

- 1. Expect several waves. Many people were killed by returning to their homes too soon – before the last wave had passed.*
- 2. Head for high ground and stay there.*
- 3. Don't worry about your belongings. You can always replace things, but you only have one life.*
- 4. If you can't get to high ground, or you don't have time, go to an upper story of a sturdy building, or get on its roof.*
- 5. As a last resort, climb a tree. At least a dozen people near Maullín, Chile, survived the 1960 tsunami by climbing trees. If you are swept up by a tsunami, grab onto something that floats – a tree, door, or a large piece of floating debris.*

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Tsunamis are tremendously powerful.

1. Following a tsunami, ocean waves can reach a height of feet.

2. The waves of a tsunami can reach speeds of miles per hour.

3. Tidal waves from a tsunami have been known to have traveled miles.

4. The Indonesian tsunami killed about people and left homeless.

5. Tsunamis are relatively rare in the Indian Ocean. Only have been recorded in the last 100 years.

6. In the Pacific Ocean tsunamis occurred between 1992 and 1996.

7. One reporter described her city as looking like a huge .

8. Many believe the Indonesian tsunami was the worst natural disaster in the history of the .

9. If caught in a tsunami, you should realize that there will be several .

To save yourself you should try to reach ground. As a last resort, climb a .

If you are swept up by a tsunami, grab onto something that , like a .

10. Many of the countries hit by the tsunami are working on a system, in case such a disaster happens again.