

# SUMMER GUIDE

Best picnic spots, books, what's on  
**A3**



# SETTING SAIL

Destination  
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**Mark Nicholas**  
Is cricket dying?  
**OPINION**

# THE



# AGE

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■ **Seven nations hit**

■ **Biggest quake since 1964**

■ **Aftershocks expected**

# Tsunamis kill thousands

An underwater earthquake off Indonesia has unleashed a series of massive waves, casting a trail of death across Asia.

By **CONNIE LEVETT**  
BANGKOK  
and **TIM JOHNSTON**  
JAKARTA



## TOLL AT A GLANCE

- SRI LANKA**
  - At least 2200 killed, 1 million affected.
- ANDAMAN ISLANDS (Indian)**
  - At least 100 dead.
- INDONESIA**
  - At least 721 killed, most on Sumatra.
- THAILAND**
  - At least 223 killed.
- MALAYSIA**
  - At least 29 killed.
- BURMA**
  - At least 10 killed.
- MALDIVES**
  - Low-lying islands inundated, two-thirds of capital Male flooded.

**HELP LINE**  
Australians seeking information about relatives can call 1800 00 22 14.

## NEWS 2 & 3

- Where the tsunamis struck
- Scenes of chaos



Damaged vehicles and debris litter a street in Phuket, Thailand after the most powerful earthquake in 40 years triggered massive tsunamis, leaving more than 5000 people dead across Asian coasts.

PICTURE: AP

THOUSANDS of people are dead across the coasts of Asia, killed by monster waves set off by an underwater earthquake off the coast of Indonesia.

The quake sent massive waves, up to 10 metres high, across the Indian Ocean: west to the Maldives, north-west to India and Sri Lanka, north into the Andaman Islands and Thailand and east to Malaysia, leaving more than 5000 feared dead in seaside towns and villages.

It measured 8.9 on the Richter scale, making it the fifth most powerful since 1900, striking at 8am local time yesterday (midday in Melbourne).

The number of dead was climbing last night as reports from remote areas came in.

In Sri Lanka, authorities believe at least 2200 people are dead, and fear the figure will climb. The worst-hit area appeared to be the south and east, where beach hotels were inundated or swept away.

Huge waves pounded coastal villages after building up speed over 1600 kilometres of open waters. The Prime Minister's office said 1 million people — about 5 per cent of the population — had been affected.

A national disaster has been declared and the Government has appealed for emergency international assistance.

"The army and the navy have sent rescue teams; we have deployed four choppers and half the navy's eastern fleet to look for survivors," said military spokesman Brigadier Daya Ratnayake.

Pope John Paul appealed for swift international help during his Sunday blessing. "The Christmas feast has been made sad by the news that reaches us from South-East Asia," he told a crowd in St Peter's Square.

In India, at least 2000 people died. Tamil Nadu was the worst affected state with possibly more than 800 people killed, 200 in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and nearly 100 in Kerala. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh alerted the navy and offered urgent help to Sri Lanka.

In Thailand, at least 223 people had been killed, and more than 1000 injured, officials said,

after the waves hit islands off the south of the country, including the popular resort of Phuket. A police officer said at least six of the dead were foreigners.

The Government ordered the evacuation of stricken areas and closed the airport on Phuket.

More than 100 tourists on diving holidays were missing from islands off southern Thailand, about 70 of them in the famed Emerald Cave, where rescue efforts were underway.

Stunned Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said: "Nothing like this has ever happened in our country before."

In the Maldives, the capital, Male, was largely under water late last night and the airport closed. Officials expressed anxiety for the fate of dozens of low-lying atolls crowded with tourists. A British tourist died of a heart

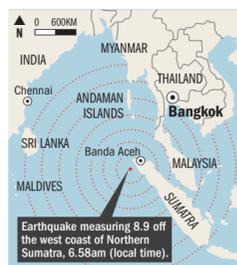
attack as the waves hit his resort. The Maldivian government in a statement said there were several casualties, but gave no details.

In Indonesia, officials said 721 people had been killed but warned they expected the death toll to rise substantially.

Communications in coastal towns facing the epicentre of the quake off the western coast of Aceh remain down, raising fears of even worse carnage. At least 10 powerful aftershocks were also reported in the province.

In Malaysia, 29 people were drowned and many others were missing. The worst-hit was the popular north-western holiday resort of Penang, where 21 people — including at least two foreigners — were killed.

Ten people were reported dead in Burma.



The quake was the world's biggest since 1964, said Julie Martinez, geophysicist for the US Geological Survey, in Colorado. "It is multiple earthquakes along the same fault line," she said. Paul Ramsbottom, a Briton on holiday in Phuket, said: "It happened in cycles. There would be

a surge and then it would retreat and then there would be a next surge which was more violent and it went on like that. Then there was this one almighty surge. This was the one that literally picked up pick-up trucks and motorcycles and threw them around in front of us."

An international relief effort has begun, with the European Union pledging an initial 3 million euro (\$A5.3 million).

Two Russian transport planes will leave in the next few days for the region carrying tents, other supplies and rescue personnel.

Last night the Department of Foreign Affairs could not confirm whether any Australians had been killed.

The Cocos Islands, a remote Australian territory in the Indian Ocean, was hit by a half-metre wave.

## How paradise turned to hell

By **ALAN MORISON**  
PHUKET, THAILAND

PARADISE was ripped asunder yesterday, washed away by a series of freak waves that left the Thai holiday island of Phuket dealing with its biggest disaster in modern times.

At least 168 people and more than 1000 were injured, officials said.

Among the survivors was Natalia Moyano, 22, of Sydney who was one of the 117 patients — including 29 foreigners — in Wachira Hospital following the disaster. She was being treated for torn ligaments.

"The water kept rising. It was

very slow at first, then all of a sudden, it went right up," Ms Moyano said. "At first I didn't think there was any danger, but when I realised the water kept rising so quickly, I tried to jump over a fence, but it broke."

The Thai Government ordered the evacuation of the stricken areas, which included the main beaches of Phuket, popular with tourists and at the height of its holiday season.

The tsunamis tossed cars around like toys and swept into luxury hotels.

At Wachira Hospital, in Phuket City, doctors and nurses were struggling to cope with scores of injured people.

There, Canadian Don Howie was sitting and counting his blessings. He had bandaged arms and legs and an amazing story to tell.

The 57-year-old had gone snorkelling at Kata Noi beach about 9am yesterday.

The first Mr Howie knew of the impending disaster was when a gigantic surge sucked the water from under him.

"The sea suddenly surged out for about, oh, 200 metres," he said. "There was nothing left but sand. Luckily, I was left standing on the rocks where I had been looking at the fish and coral."

CONTINUED NEWS 2

## Family tells of picnic nightmare

A FAMILY outing turned into a nightmare when four relatives drowned during a picnic at the Grampians' MacKenzie Falls. Khalid Mir said the group noticed other people swimming near the shallows and assumed it was safe to paddle.

"Nobody knew swimming. They were mucking around near the edge . . . All of a sudden I heard, 'Somebody's drowning'." Muzaffar Mir and daughter Marina, right, both drowned.



Report NEWS 5

## Victoria may face power blackouts

VICTORIA faces an increased threat of blackouts this summer after the electricity regulator failed to win sufficient commitments from industry to scale back production in the event of a heatwave.

"There is a slightly higher risk of demand exceeding supply in a one-in-10-year type event," Victorian Energy Minister Theo Theophanous conceded.

Mr Theophanous said this would occur only if there were extreme temperatures in Victoria and South Australia at the same time and one of the major power stations broke down.

But he said domestic consumers would be the last to be affected in the event of blackouts.

Report NEWS 5

## Pakistan dazzles in Boxing Day Test



YOUSUF Youhana, left, Pakistan's first-time captain, made a dazzling century at the MCG yesterday to lead his country to a respectable 6-318 in the Boxing Day Test at the MCG. Younis and Younis Khan, another who was previously anonymous in this country's eyes, put on 192 at a run a minute, an MCG fourth-wicket record for any country.

Greg Baum, Gary Tippet NEWS 7  
Peter Roebuck, match report, scoreboard SPORT

**WEATHER** MELBOURNE Cloudy periods with a few showers. South-west winds freshening. **Top 18**  
**Tuesday Showers Top 18** **Wednesday Fine Top 21**  
**Thursday Fine Top 25** **DETAILS PAGE 16**

**ODD SPOT**  
 Police officers rescued a 35-year-old man in a mini-skirt found wedged head-first in a charity clothing bin in the Sydney suburb of Surry Hills early yesterday. The man said he got stuck while donating clothes.

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