

Tsunami devastates Sri Lankan LGBT community

from page 1

wiped out by the tsunami. ... This horrible, horrible disaster has knocked Sri Lanka so bad that it will take years and years to rebuild."

Indonesia

In Indonesia, gay groups have been unable to get any information from the most-affected areas.



The effect of the tsunami that originated from an earthquake off the coast of Indonesia was felt as far away as India and Thailand.

"We don't know about the effect of the tsunami on gay people in Aceh and North Sumatra," said Dédé Oetomo, head of GAYA NUSANTARA. "We never had any organized contact in Aceh or the island of Nias in North Sumatra, which have been hardest-hit.

"Medan, the major city on the eastern coast with a sizeable gay population, was spared due to its distance from the epicenter," Oetomo said. "The good news is that gay organizations are involved in fundraising and collecting donations together with other community groups."

Thailand

In Thailand, the gay resort of Phuket was hard-hit. It has many gay guest houses, restaurants, bars, shops and coffee-houses. But, according to Ulf Mikaelsson and Börje Carlsson, two Swedes who run the Connect Guest House and Coffee Bar, most of the gay businesses are "far enough from the beach to be untouched by the tragedy."

"The day of the tsunami disaster, the Connect, with its satellite television connection, was one of the only sources of news coverage of the tragedy as it unfolded," the couple wrote in an email. "Scores of native and foreign gays gathered around the mounted television and ate, drank and bonded with each other as news came in as to the losses being sustained.

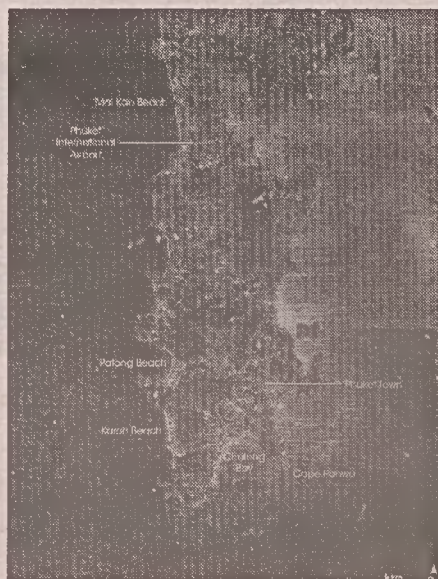
"Right now, the Phuket gay community is busy raising funds for those Thais and foreigners who suffered injury and loss due to the tidal wave," the couple said. "It will take some months to clean up and rebuild the beach area, but everything else on the island, 500 yards or more from the beach, is exactly as it was — untouched by the tsunami. If you want to help us in Patong, do not cancel your tour to Patong Beach. Now more than ever we need your support."

Carlsson's experience of the tsunami

"It was a clear blue sky and we were

having our morning coffee at Connect when we heard people screaming that the beach had disappeared. When I got close to the beach I heard more screaming and suddenly I saw this huge wave, taller than the palm trees, coming to crash down on us. ... We rushed into a hotel as the huge wave rolled into Patong Beach. The giant wave flooded the lobby within seconds and dragged furniture onto the street. I had to wrap myself around a pillar to avoid being swept away. As I was standing there, a car actually floated into the lobby and overturned because the current was so strong. The water was up to my chest and I was holding on to my boyfriend's hand because he can't swim.

It's a strange feeling to walk from one side of Rath-U-Thit road to the other. "On one side it looks like a war zone and on the other side nothing had changed."



Satellite images show tsunami destruction of Phuket, Thailand.

Contact information

Sri Lanka

Companions on a Journey
46/50 Robert Drive
Robert Gunawardhane
Mawatha, Colombo-06, Sri Lanka
Telephone: 011-94-11-251-4680
Fax: 011-94-11-555-7660
Email: sherman@sri.lanka.net
Web: www.companions-lanka.org

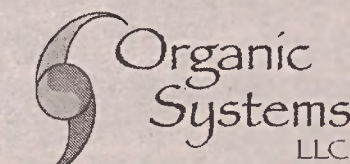
Equal Ground
Phone: 011-94-11-268-2278.
Email:
graycat@sltnet.lk
donate@equal-ground.org
Web: www.equal-ground.org

Indonesia

GAYA NUSANTARA,
Jalan Mojo Kidul
I No. 11-A, Surabaya 60285, Indonesia
Telephone/fax: 011-62-31-591-4668 Cell
phone: 011-62-811-311-743
Email: doetomo@indo.net.id.

Thailand

Connect
Telephone: 011-66-76-294-195
Email: connect@beachpatong.com
Web: www.beachpatong.com
GayPatong.com.
Email: webmaster@gaypatong.com Web:
www.gaypatong.com



We care for your environment naturally!

Selective Pruning

Shrubs, Plants and Trees

Selective Pruning at the right time of year retains the natural shape of a plant and prevents unhealthy suckers & water sprouts. Contact us for a free estimate.

10% off pruning fee when you mention this ad!

704-334-5727
organicsystemsllc@yahoo.com

Sir Speedy

PRINTING • COPYING • DIGITAL NETWORK
Fast, Friendly and Courteous Service

Printing • Typesetting • High Speed Copying • Binding • Notary • Invitations • Laminating • Resumes • Business Cards • Full Color Copies • Rubber Stamps • Holy Union Announcements • MUCH MORE!

301 North Caswell Road

(Across from Mercy Hospital, corner of 5th St.)

(704) 375-8349 / FAX (704) 342-1066

8pm - 2am
Mon - Sat
Club DAKS
DAKSTAVERN.COM
704-347-6826
1704 Shamrock dr.
MON. - Brandy Alexander's Cabaret. Guest Star "Boom Boom LaTour" Jan. 17th
Featuring DJ Rocker Spinning Live all night
FRI - NOIZE featuring DJ MAVRICK House & Techno
SAT - DAKS TALENT SHOWCASE Show starts at midnight Hosted by the Outrageous Nairobi
Featuring DJ Rocker Spinning Live all night with the best light show on the east side of Charlotte
The Plaza Rd 36th