

# Floods, landslides kill 91 in Sri Lanka



Sri Lankan residents make their way through floodwaters

**Colombo**  
Flooding and landslides killed at least 91 people and left another 110 missing in Sri Lanka as the monsoon set yesterday, dumping record rainfalls in many parts of the island, authorities said.

About 20,000 people were also driven out of their homes in the south and western parts of the country, the Disaster Management Centre said.

"The Southwest monsoon began with very intense rain," deputy minister for disaster management Dunesh Gankanda told reporters in Colombo.

"There are some areas where we are unable to reach, but relief operations are under way."

The DMC said the toll rose to 91 dead and another 110 missing as reports came in from areas which had been inaccessible earlier in the day.

Sri Lanka appealed to the international community including the United Nations and neighbouring countries for help as the numbers of

dead and missing climbed. Heavy rains in the southern and western parts of the country have destroyed hundreds of homes and cut off several roads.

"The (foreign) ministry will continue to monitor the flood situation and seek assistance as required in consultation with the Ministry of Disaster Management," the government said in a statement.

It said Colombo had already sounded out the UN and its South Asian neighbours.

The latest flooding was the worst since May 2003 when 250 people were killed and 10,000 homes destroyed after a similarly powerful Southwest monsoon, officials said.

On Friday the military deployed thousands of troops to reach marooned villagers and the airforce carried out several rescue operations to pluck people from rooftops of flooded homes.

In the early hours of the day a mountainside collapsed

on a women's hostel at a tea plantation at Neluwa in the island's south, killing at least seven women, police said.

Evacuation notices were issued to residents along the Kelani river, which flows to the Indian Ocean through the capital Colombo, amid fears that it was about to burst its banks.

"The residents who are living along the Kelani should evacuate to high ground within six hours," the DMC said.

DMC officials said the monsoon had been expected on Thursday night and ended a prolonged drought that had threatened agriculture as well as hydro power generation.

The rains filled the reservoirs used for hydro power, which had hit rock bottom, raising concerns of power shortage in June.

But officials said most reservoirs were now so full they were in danger of spilling over and causing dangers of flooding to people living downstream. (AFP)



Sri Lankan military rescue workers and villagers search for survivors at the site of a mudslide in Bellana village in Kalutara

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**Philippines' Duterte has assured full support to soldiers to rape up to three women under his newly imposed regional martial law. Do you support Duterte's decision to impose martial law?**  
 Yes  No  Cant Say



**We will be here to cooperate and do everything we can in order to increase this cooperation at the European level, in order to do more from a bilateral point of view against terrorism,"**

**Emmanuel Macron**  
French President

## Rest in sight

**Israel PM has kidney stones removed**



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu returned to work after surgery to remove kidney stones, his office said.

**Azerbaijan arrests prominent opp. leader**

Azerbaijan has arrested a prominent opposition leader, her party said on Friday, denouncing the move as a latest step in the crackdown on dissent in the tightly-controlled country.

**At least 5 dead as militias clash in Libya**

At least five people were killed in fierce clashes on Friday between rival armed groups in the Libyan capital Tripoli.

**Cyprus peace talks in limbo**

A UN drive for a crunch Cyprus peace conference in Geneva has failed leaving the future of talks on reunifying the island in limbo.

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## Nepal lets Everest permit dodger off \$22,000 fine

**Kathmandu**

Nepal said yesterday a South African who tried to climb Mount Everest without a permit can go home without paying a \$22,000 fine, but banned him from mountaineering there for 10 years.

Ryan Sean Davy, 43, was found hiding in a cave near Everest base camp nearly two weeks ago after being spotted on the world's highest mountain without a \$11,000 climbing permit.

The South African, who has no prior mountaineering experience, said he could not

afford the hefty permit fee but wanted to scale Everest and document his experience in a book and film.

"The tourism department has excused me and given me permission to go home," Davy said yesterday.

The head of the tourism department confirmed that Davy had been let off the heavy fine and just given a 10-year ban on climbing mountains in Nepal.

"We have imposed a 10 year ban on him against mountaineering in Nepal. No fine has been imposed," said Dinesh Bhattarai, head of the tourism department.

## Vietnam gets US vessel



Members of the Vietnam coast guard embarking the CSB-8020 cutter

**Hanoi**

The US transferred its seventh security vessel this week to Vietnam, the embassy said yesterday, boosting defence ties amid a spike in tensions in the South China Sea. The US coast guard gave its Vietnamese counterpart a high endurance cutter in

a ceremony in Honolulu on Thursday, the embassy in Hanoi said.

The gift comes several days after the US delivered six patrol boats to Vietnam's coast guard to strengthen its "maritime law enforcement" and humanitarian response operations.

## Briton jailed for 15 years for planting bomb on train

**London**

A 20-year-old British man was sentenced to 15 years in prison yesterday for planting a bomb on a busy London Underground train last year in what he claimed was a Halloween prank.

Student Damon Smith, who has a form of autism and an obsession with weapons, left the bomb in a backpack on a crowded train in October.

The abandoned bag was

spotted by two members of the public who handed it to the driver, who in turn raised the alarm when he saw wires sticking out.

Smith was convicted for possession of an explosive substance with intent and sentenced to 15 years in a young offenders' institution, a type of prison.

The bag was packed with explosives and ball bearings and the device was timed to go off within minutes.