

Tsunami Survivor Rescued at Sea

(AP) — A tsunami survivor rescued after 15 days adrift in the Indian Ocean recounted how he lived on coconuts that floated by, tearing them open with his teeth.

The 21-year-old man was picked up Sunday by a container ship after being swept out to sea by the tsunami from a beachfront construction site in Aceh, Indonesia.

Appearing fit despite the ordeal, he said he saw four of his friends grab pieces of debris or uprooted trees, "but we drifted away from each other as the waves rolled us out further into the sea."

For a while, he lay on a 5-foot-long plank, weak and exhausted.

He ended up staying on the listing boat for five days before spotting a large unmanned raft with a hut on it. He swam up to it and found a gallon bottle of water aboard.

On the 15th day, Ari said he awoke and saw the container ship bearing down on him.

The Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunami has killed more than 150,000 people across southern Asia.



Tony Geyer guides his father down a road which was submerged by a mudslide in Southern California. (AP photo)

Mudslides Devastate California

Nineteen dead, others injured or missing

(AP) — Scattered rain showers lashed waterlogged Southern California again Tuesday, hampering efforts to find survivors buried by a mudslide in a coastal community and prompting hundreds to flee a mountain town below a rain-swollen reservoir and along rising streams.

The succession of storms that

have brought astonishing amounts of rain was blamed for the deaths of at least 19 people.

The National Weather Service said Tuesday that downtown Los Angeles had recorded its wettest 15 consecutive days on record, with a total of 17 inches of rain falling in the period ending Monday.

In La Conchita, a small community on a spit of land between the hills south of Santa Barbara and the Pacific Ocean, a massive mudslide Monday killed three people, injured 12 and left up to 21 unaccounted-for.

Southeast of Los Angeles, Or-

ange County sheriff's personnel evacuated hundreds of people Tuesday along a three-mile stretch of swelling San Juan Creek in San Juan Capistrano.

The storm also forced the evacuation of an apartment complex in Alhambra, a suburb on the edge of Los Angeles, where authorities feared a rain-saturated hill might give way, and a man was trapped Tuesday in a cave in San Bernardino County.

Roads all over Southern California were being closed periodically because of high water.

Ohio Electoral Votes Contested

(AP) — When members of the Congressional Black Caucus and other House Democrats needed just one senator to sign a challenge to Ohio's electoral votes, they knew who to ask - California's Barbara

Boxer, among the fiercest liberals in a state full of them.

More than a decade after she led fellow congresswomen up the steps of the Senate to demand hearings into Anita Hill's sexual harassment claims against Clarence Thomas, Boxer staged her latest - and perhaps most dramatic - rebellion Thursday.

By joining African-American Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones, D-Ohio, in lodging a formal protest against how Ohio's presidential votes were tallied, Boxer provided the needed Senate signature that forced the House and Senate to meet separately to debate the complaint.

What was to have been a stately ceremony quickly turned into a sometimes contentious discussion of voting that infuriated Republicans.

Boxer said she decided to sign the complaint after concluding there were real voting problems in Ohio that needed to be discussed.

No other U.S. Senator, including Oregon's Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith or a single member of Congress from either Oregon or Washington voted to support the electoral challenge as it failed to win passage.



Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones, D-Ohio with Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif. (background) object to the certification of Ohio's electoral votes.



U.S. Rep. Melvin L. Watt

New Chair of Black Caucus

U.S. Rep. Melvin L. Watt, D-N.C. was named the new chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus last week.

Watt promised that he and the other 43 members of the caucus will "keep the continuum of progress moving forward toward equality" over the next two years.

In his farewell address as outgoing chairman of the CBC, U.S. Rep. Elijah E. Cummings D-Md. expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve the group.

He said Watt had the intellect, skill, and balanced approach to solving today's public policy challenges.

"I am fully confident that Congressman Watt will build upon the legacy of the Caucus of being the 'Conscience of the Congress' and lead us to new heights."

Deadly Iraq Unsafe for Many Voters

(AP) — Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said Tuesday that some areas of Iraq will probably be too unsafe to take part in the Jan. 30 elections, his first public acknowledgment that the government would not be able to exert control in key areas controlled by insurgents.

Allawi promised, however, to increase the size of the army in the face of a bloody insurgency, whose latest victims included 13 Iraqis killed by two bombings.

The last two days have seen a new surge of insurgent attacks in the weeks before the balloting, with four roadside bombings and suicide strikes on Iraqi and American forces.

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