



### Visit to Sri Lanka for Childrens Orphanage



Tony Matharu, chairman of the Tsunami Disaster Appeal and Dean Buchanan, lead architect, have returned from a successful trip to Sri Lanka where they toured the Disaster Area and met with the Hon. Prime Minister, the First Secretary, the Prime Minister's Additional Secretary and a number of Government and non-Government agents in order to obtain support for the Tsunami Disaster Appeal orphanage project and to seek assistance with obtaining Government land/buildings in the Disaster Area. The Hon. Prime Minister together with all other parties expressed their thanks and support for the Tsunami Disaster Appeal's initiatives and extended an invitation to visit a number of Government owned sites, including those near Weligama which had previously been identified as potentially suitable for orphanage projects.

As a result of these meetings it was confirmed that all possible official assistance will be afforded to the Tsunami Disaster Appeal and assurances were given that the orphanage plans will be realised as soon as possible. Dean Buchanan together with the local appointed architect and project manager are currently assessing the relative feasibility of the Weligama sites and will be adjusting the orphanage plans if necessary.



### Another successful event

The British Hospitality Industry's Gala Dinner and Concert held at the Grange City Hotel and sponsored by Grange Hotels on Thursday 3rd March was an outstanding success. Hospitality Industry professionals enjoyed wonderful food and entertainment provided by Keedie, Fleetwood Bac, Alistair Griffin and the All Beats. Nearly £45,000 was raised on the night with a number of guests pledging their ongoing support to the Tsunami Disaster Appeal.

Special thanks are due to Daniel Braham of Berwin Leighton Paisner who coordinated the event, Grange Hotels who hosted the event entirely at their own cost, Cobra Beer and Fior Brands for the beer and Campari, to the performers and to those many hospitality professionals who lent their generous support.





## Latest Statistics from Sri Lanka

The latest official figures put the number of dead at 30,882. 6,088 people are still listed as missing and 504,440 are displaced. Many children are thought to have lost one or both parents and assessments are ongoing to determine precise numbers. It is safe to say that the official number of missing is likely to be an understatement and that the combined total of fatalities is closer to 50,000.

The fishing industry, which is the most significant livelihood source to coastal communities in Sri Lanka, suffered extensive damage. Weligama's fishing industry was totally destroyed. It is estimated that 81% of the country's fishing vessels were lost or severely damaged and ten out of twelve major fishing harbours were damaged. Approximately 500,000 people are in camps. The government used to building 500 houses a year now needs to build 80,000 immediately - a mammoth task

## The Impact of the Tsunami

in Sri Lanka cannot be overestimated. Whilst photographs of damaged and destroyed houses and businesses can produce a one dimensional snapshot of devastation, it is impossible to imagine hundred of miles of this destruction. We listened to several stories from people who have lost almost everything and looked at photographs of the dead and missing; a truly shocking and humbling experience. More positively we were amazed by the work the local population have already completed. We saw large sections of road, bridges and railway lines still lying upended in the water but new roads, railway lines and bridges have already been built and are being used. The main road to the south was usable 72 hours after the Tsunami, the bridges were built and in use with road and railway lines within 53 days. Simply incredible! Regrettably the most common sentiment from the locals, at all levels, was that the promised external aid and pledged support had not materialised. We were left wondering what has happened to the funds NGO's have collected. There was next to no visible evidence of the British NGO's activity amongst the thousands of temporary housing sites, although we did see one or two 'branded' tents and some water supplies. The needs are huge and the situation is desperate. We left the island more determined than ever to get the orphanage open as soon as possible

- **Dean Buchanan**



## Making Donations

If you have already contributed to the Tsunami Disaster Appeal we extend our special thanks. If you wish to assist by making a donation these can be made online at [www.tsunamidisasterappeal.co.uk](http://www.tsunamidisasterappeal.co.uk), by cheque to the Tsunami Disaster Appeal, 58 Rochester Row, London SW1P 1JU, or by credit card by telephoning 020 7828 3276. Alternatively if you have an initiative which you would like us to consider for the appeal please call Tony Matharu or Helen Smith on 0207 630 2000.