



Floods

"It has been 2 weeks now since heavy rains caused the River Mama in the Zesta Valley to overflow its banks. For days the densely populated village of Perva on either side of the river's banks was under as much as 20 feet of water at one time.

"Two elderly gentlemen who refused to be evacuated lost their lives in the floods. All of the village's crops were destroyed and thousands of domestic animals drowned in the floods. The proper disposal of the carcasses of these animals is proving difficult and there has been an outbreak of salmonella in two nearby villages.

"Most of the houses in the village, which were made of pine, were washed away as well. An estimated 8,000 adults and 6,000 children have been left homeless. A number of these Perva villagers who are being housed in emergency shelters in nearby villages have come down with gastroenteritis and influenza.

"An interview of persons in the emergency shelters revealed a sense of helplessness and hopelessness and a middle-aged villager summed up his feelings nicely by stating that he didn't know if he was standing on his feet or on his head!"



Oil Spill

"The romantic Caribbean island of Ailam has a population of 1.5 million persons and is well known internationally for its beautiful beaches, its exquisite cuisine and its water sports. Tourism is the island's major foreign exchange earner. Its west coast is home to 12 of the Island's 14 five-star hotels e.g., Heaven Bay Luxury Resort where the Oscar Award winning movie, "Dreamers' Paradise" was filmed late last year. During the height of the tourist season this year, hoteliers recorded occupancy rates as high as 106%.

"But all that has now changed. Early one morning, residents of Ailam flocked from all parts of the Island in disbelief to see for themselves the damage which had been done to the west coast of their Island. Not even the oldest people on the Island had ever seen anything like this.

"Late the evening before, it had been noted for the first time that the majority of the west coast seas were covered with large 'islands' of what appeared to be crude oil. As the waves bashed against the previously golden beaches they became a greasy, ghostly black. Masses of seriously injured or dead fish, crabs, turtles and birds could be seen all along the coast line. Authorities speculated that a tanker which had passed in the Island's waters two days before might have been the cause of the disaster.

"With exactly one month now having passed since this very tragic incident, thousands of persons in Ailam are now out of work as over 75% of the island's west coast hotels and ancillary businesses have had to close their doors. The Prime Minister has estimated the loss in revenue so far to be well over 50 million U.S. dollars and things are expected to get much worse as potential visitors to the island are now being deterred by overseas travel agents from travelling to Ailam at this time. Elements of social unrest are already evident on the Island and yesterday, the Minister of Finance increased consumption tax from 8% to 12% in a desperate attempt to assist those who have found themselves without a job."