



RSSL NEWS

JANUARY 2005

The Journal of THE RADIO SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA

The General Meeting for the Month of January will be held at the Auditorium of Vidya Mandiraya, SLAAS – Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science 120/10, Vidya Mawatha, Colombo 7 on Wednesday the 26th of January 2005 at 5.30 pm.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Please note that unless otherwise notified, monthly General Meetings will be held at the Auditorium of SLAAS at 0530 PM on the last Wednesday of the month.. Please also monitor the RSSL net regularly on 145.625 MHz at 0900 P.M. for RSSL announcements You are welcome to contact any Council member if you need to verify. Membership and ID Card applications can be obtained at the meetings Membership renewals are also accepted by the Treasurer at the monthly meetings.

2003/2004 Accounts

Notice is hereby given that the 54th AGM of RSSL which was held on 1st August 2004 and adjourned pending the tabling and adoption of Annual Audited Accounts for 2003/04 will be reconvened on Thursday 24th Feb 2005 for the purpose of tabling and adoption of 2003/2004 Audited Accounts. The venue is SLAAS Auditorium and time of meeting. 5.30pm.

New Year Greetings: The Council wishes all RSSL Members a Happy and Prosperous New Year. We know of no one who celebrated the dawn of the New Year due to the terrible destruction brought upon by the Tsunami. However, in our efforts to rebuild our nation let us wish each other the strength and wisdom that we need for the mammoth task ahead.

Tsunami Disaster Net

The recent Tsunami disaster resulted in big loss of life and damage to the telecommunication infrastructure cutting of contact to many affected areas.

The RSSL stepped in to provide the much needed emergency communications needs in the immedia aftermath of the disaster.

Kusal 4S7KE, Asantha 4S7AK and Dimuthu 4S7DZ and a few volunteers (Channa and Achini Abeygunawardena and Manjula Abeygunawardena) left Colombo on 27th Monday late night in two 4 wheel drive vehicles to Hambantota. The party carried with them ICOM 7400 HF loaned by the Japanese DX group from Kansai, two fully charged sealed lead Acid batteries (with provision to use batteries in the vehicles if needed), water, food, relief supplies to the affected, large 30 litre cans of extra diesel etc. (Thanks for Asantha and Channa for arranging the relief/medical supplies and fuel donation and for Touchwood investment Ltd for the donation). The journey was through Ratnapura, Pelmadulla, Embilipitiya, Suriyawewa area avoiding the coastal belt. The group reached Hambantota in the early hours to Tueseday the 27th. An HF station was set up by 7.30 AM at the GA's office. Until that time there had been no contact with the outside world from Hambantota except from a Satellite phone sent there a few hours before which worked only outdoors and there was no way of recharging the batteries. A HF station was set up in Colombo at Temple trees which was initiated by Bharat 4S5BA Victor 4S7VK assisted by Kule 4S7KG, Wijay 4S7VJ and Kamal 4S7AB. By 9 AM emergency traffic started flowing and the RSSL did it's duty to

the nation in an hour of need. The Hambantota station worked on 7.060 MHz with a wire dipole antenna and transmitted with less than 5 Watts in order to conserve battery power as power as electricity was not available. The RSSL commends and appreciates the effort by Asantha, Kusal and Dimuthu for willingly going on this difficult journey and putting up with hard conditions to help the people of Sri Lanka and honour to the Amateur Radio Service.

The communication point at Hambantota was discontinued soon after the Police set up a communications centre at the GA's office and the mobile phone service was restored.

4S7SW Dr. Sarath Wickramasuriya also operated a station from Rahula College Matara helping in Medical traffic and passing messages to Colombo which were acted upon by the RSSL station and other 4S7s. Sarath operated under very difficult conditions and the RSSL thanks him for meeting the challenge.

Another mobile group was hurriedly arranged at the request of the Secretary to the Prime Minister Mr. Nalin Weeratunge and it comprised of Wimal 4S7WI and Nalaka 4S6NM which left Colombo to Matara on same day gathering data needed for relief operations and transmitting them to Colombo vial the Yati repeater on VHF.

Kusal, Asantha and Thusitha 4S6TP left for Matara and Galle on the 29th night and operated from Galle. Many relief camps in Galle and Matara were visited where relief and medical supplies were distributed and the needed disaster/relief traffic were passed to relevant authorities. Siri 4S7SA and SWL Udaya Jayantha from Galle also joined.

After the immediate need for communications had passed the RSSL operated 3 stations for the Social Welfare Ministry to help in relief operations to carry traffic between Seeduwa, Colombo and Nawala as there was congestion on their normal communications network. 4S7CF was the coordinator of this project ably assisted by 4S7VJ, KG, 4S7NI, EA, VK, 5SS, Nalantha and SWL Jaliya.

On the 11th of January we had a visit by two Amateurs from the UK Malcolm G0MXT and John Baker with disaster relief and the RSSL arranged for them to visit Pththuvil for disaster relief. 4S7DF along with Sarath Kothalawala 4S7SK willingly came forward to go to Poththuvil and the RSSL hired a vehicle which was fitted with HF and VHF Mobile rigs and antennas thanks the Dammika and the RSSL kept communications going right through the journey. The effort was a great success and it was also done to assess the reliability of HF communications in areas where there is no mobile phone and landline coverage.

The lack of suitable equipment and volunteers hampered a greater effort. From day one 4S7DF was ready with his own equipment to go anywhere provided suitable transport could be found. However, it was difficult to obtain such transport from the authorities and other sources

since there was a chaotic situation as the disaster was completely beyond the imagination of anyone.

A Special word of thanks also go to Asgar 4S7AA and Fauzulla 4S7FA who volunteered and successfully serviced the Yati repeater to assist in disaster communications. This was a very difficult journey and the Council wishes to thank them for undertaking such a hard journey on behalf of the RSSL.

The Council also wishes to thank the following for their help and support in the RSSL's disaster communications effort.

4S7AK, 7AB, 7AA, 7FM, 7KE, 7EA, 7DF, 7DZ, 7DA, 7WN, 7KG, 7CF, 7WI, 7VJ, 7NI, 7PK, 7VK, 7SA, 7SK 7CP, 7HG, 7HP, 7SW, 7RR, 7AI, 7MM, 7MZ, 6NM, 6TP, 7SA, 5BA, 5SS, 5NX. 4S7RO/6Y5, 4S7PE/G4AJG, 9N9Z and SWLs Jayantha and Jaliya (forgive me if I have missed out on anyone) A few others were disappointed that they couldn't help as they themselves were working overtime to keep other services needed, like medical and air traffic going. However, it has to be stated that there was a disappointing silence from many to answer the call of Amateur Radio and the helpless people of this country.

The RSSL: also wishes to thank many international clubs for their concern and support including a willingness to help with Equipment. We also received equipment from Icom Inc. in Japan and the French and British Amateur organisations. A donation of a duplexer for the Danish repeater is being arranged by David Gilmore from the USA through the intervention of Ekendra 4S7EF. The RSSL is in the process of getting the necessary clearance to obtain these donations including those that are stuck in the Customs.

Personally myself 4S7VK, would like to thank many of my international friends through SW Broadcast work I do, who assured me that they will support me financially in all my efforts in the disaster relief. The financial needs of all disaster related operations will be borne by them without any strain on the RSSL.

Media Coverage on Tsunami disaster relief by Amateur

The Emergency communications services provided by RSSL was given wide publicity on Internet websites including the ARRL web site. Lanka Business online also highlighted the RSSL operation. A letter to the editor appeared on the Island by Sena 4S5SS on 15th Jan. and a news item was published on Daily News highlighting our activities on 7th Jan. Vidusara also carried an article compiled by Yoshan 4S7YW.

RSSL web page also had a special page on Tsunami Disaster Net which also carried a list of essentially needed drugs by Health Ministry submitted by Dr. Nihal Wijesuriya – 4S7WN. There was a 15 fold increase in hits to RSSL website over the normal daily average in the days after the Tsunami disaster.

Vacancy for Council Member

George Jayaratne 4S6GJ has resigned from the Council due to ill health. The Vacancy in the Council created by George's resignation will be filled at the February General Meeting.

Echolink Under testing

The RSSL got a complete Echolink station as a donation from a Group of American radio hams. It was initiated by Doug KD7LRJ. Adam Steed KE7BZX who came here for tsunami relief service delivered the equipment. Adam and his friend also spent a week providing relief supplies to affected people in SL. The RSSL is grateful for their gesture.

The Echolink set up is currently under test daily from 2200 hrs till midnight local time. Yati repeater is linked to the Echolink through Internet. The Sri lankan node is currently being hosted at the QTH of Kusal from where it is linked to the Internet.

A few points to remember when communicating through Internet as these transmissions are carried internationally.

- Say the full callsign using phonetic alphabet.
- Give pause of about 2 seconds between each transmission and wait till repeater carrier goes off before taking the next transmission
- Use proper operating practices and procedures
- Do not have long overs as there is a time out period in Echolink also in addition to repeater timeout.
- It is preferable if QSOs are made in English when repeater is linked to Echolink as there are many hams from foreign countries who log in to RSSL repeater through Internet and some of them are logged in only for listening also.
- Momentarily release the PTT during conversations to make sure that you are not doubling with another station either local or through internet.

Echolink can also be accessed from a PC having appropriate Soundcard, mic and speaker and an Internet connection. To download software and for more information visit www.echolink.org For any clarifications please contact Kusal – 4S7KE

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