

I made it ashore with only the shorts I was wearing and my wallet. There were 43 people on board, all nationalities, fortunately no one was seriously injured. The owner of the ferry company paid for flights, food, passports and accommodation in Bali and Jakarta while we organised ourselves but nothing for any items lost. Adele and I then spent the next week in government buildings organising new passports to get home. Local newspapers had varied reports, some were true and others said the navy picked us up within minutes. Ferry accidents happen a lot in Indonesia. Safety is not a big issue here. This country has a fair amount of corruption as well. I've learned to always take out travel insurance, as I lost all my gear when the boat went down. Despite the ordeal, I would definitely go back.

A translation of the newspaper article:
Motor breakdown close to the mainland
Ship went down and all passengers luckily safe

Special thanks to Bertus Hilgers for the translation

The ABK (name of the ferry) went down and all passengers safe, shocked but don't like to say anything about the accident. It is the time of the celebration about the Year of the Buffalo. All the people are not only on the mainland but also on the water, so actually there were a lot of ships. It was busy on the sea. The boat sank because the owner of that ferry had problems and it happened in the afternoon Jan 2, ferry had 44 passengers and 35 are people from all over the world. 5 are people from Indonesia, 4 are the crew of the ABK. The ferry that left Gili Trawangan at midday picked up passengers from all islands, suddenly at 2pm the motor of the ship broke down and the ship sank. Passengers panicked. One of the passengers didn't believe that motor dead caused the ferry to sink, said it was a leak. Was not far off mainland so passengers jumped overboard and got to mainland at three different locations, on beach through surf, some picked up by fishermen, some by Indonesian army. No passengers hurt all safe, none died. They lost all their possessions on board, also passengers very shocked, couldn't believe ferry sunk, police said main thing is all safe. Surf was quite huge, big swells and passengers thrown onto beach on mainland. Lucky it happened near mainland and not in the open sea. The passengers were looked after, told them don't worry, nobody died. The problem is to get the passengers, from different locations and put them all together, with help of public, fishermen and army. Local police asked the crew of the ferry the list of the names of all passengers and of course they also are in shock, and very afraid that they have to pay for all the damage, that's why they're not saying anything until the court. They couldn't find the list of names, because the paperwork was wrecked by water. One of the Indonesian crew said I don't think it sank because the motor was not working, I think there was a leak in that boat. Others say the motor didn't work and the ferry was unable to sail, that's why it went down. The investigation is still on, all passengers taken care of and dropped off at Bali. They were lucky enough to be near the mainland and all safe and we would say to them Happy New Year. The Year of Buffalo lucky for them. ■

We got the door open again and water rushed in. I grabbed her life jacket, she lurched forward hitting her head on the doorway beam. I slid over but managed to get my foot between myself and the door...

"The Year of Buffalo lucky for them"

The sinking made front page in Balinese newspapers. (Daniel third from left. The English tourist he saved is sitting on the floor in front of him)







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