



**PRESS RELEASE: Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and British Government
Acknowledge S.S. Tilawa Forgotten Tragedy**

Written by www.tilawa1942.com

UNITED KINGDOM

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's office sent the tilawa1942.com team a letter on December 16th 2022 acknowledging the S.S. Tilawa tragedy, and the importance of remembering the loss of life.

The letter was written by Mandy Godridge, Head of the Direct Communications Unit at 10 Downing Street, London, U.K.

The main section of the letter reads:

"The loss of the SS Tilawa in 1942 is desperately sad. Eight decades on, the impact is still being felt by the families of those who sadly died, including yours. It is commendable that you hosted an event in Mumbai to mark the 80th anniversary of the incident, which was attended by His Majesty's Trade Commissioner for South Asia and Deputy High Commissioner for Western India, Alan Gemmell OBE. It was particularly poignant for the Commissioner to be able to meet Arvind Jaani, one of only two known survivors from the SS Tilawa. I hope that the Commissioner's commitment to lay a wreath each year on Remembrance Sunday, in memory of those who were lost in this tragedy, will bring some comfort to families like yours."

Families connected to the Tilawa incident have responded favorably to this development, and feel this is another step in the right direction.

Founder of tilawa1942.com Emile Solanki says:

"It is important citizens of the U.K. connected to the ill-fated S.S. Tilawa has the support of its Government, especially from a Prime Minister of Indian Descent. We are facing challenges with access to archive material, having U.K. maritime museums dedicate an area to S.S. Tilawa, HMS Birmingham, and S.S. Carthage. Also, getting a response from the Japanese Government for their assistance. Therefore receiving this letter from 10 Downing Street provides some hope."



The commemoration referenced in the letter was held at the iconic Grand Hotel in Ballard Estate South Mumbai India. The intent was to officially acknowledge the incident, and memorialize the loss of 280 people who sadly perished. During the Second World War, Tilawa was hit by 2 torpedoes fired by the Japanese Imperial Navy's I-29 submarine. 678 were rescued and brought back to Bombay on November 27th 1942.

S.S. Tilawa was a passenger cargo liner built by the British India Steam Navigation company in 1924 named after a Burmese port, and used for about 18 years. Its last route from Mumbai was planned for South Africa via the Seychelles, Mombasa, and Maputo, ending in Durban. Passengers were mainly Indian nationals. On November 20th 1942 at 17:00, the ship left the Ballard Pier Mumbai. There were 222 crew members, 732 passengers, 4 gunners, 9 lifeboats, over 6,000 tons of cargo, including 60 tons of silver bullion. The Tilawa wreck site was recently discovered, and silver bars were salvaged in 2017 by a British company, Argentum Exploration Ltd.

More information on the S.S. Tilawa incident can be found at www.tilawa1942.com. This website was created for families connected to Tilawa to gain some closure, and meet fellow victims.

Encl. Letter from UK PM Office

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Head of the Direct Communications Unit

16 December 2022

Dear Mr Solanki

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your email of 2 November, regarding the 80th anniversary of the SS Tilawa tragedy.

The loss of the SS Tilawa in 1942 is desperately sad. Eight decades on, the impact is still being felt by the families of those who sadly died, including yours. It is commendable that you hosted an event in Mumbai to mark the 80th anniversary of the incident, which was attended by His Majesty's Trade Commissioner for South Asia and Deputy High Commissioner for Western India, Alan Gemmell OBE. It was particularly poignant for the Commissioner to be able to meet Arvind Jaani, one of only two known survivors from the SS Tilawa. I hope that the Commissioner's commitment to lay a wreath each year on Remembrance Sunday, in memory of those who were lost in this tragedy, will bring some comfort to families like yours.

Thank you, once again, for writing.

Yours sincerely

MANDY GODRIDGE

Mr Emile Solanki