

Guardian

Trinidad and Tobago

30749

www.guardian.co.tt

The Guardian of Democracy

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2008

80 PAGES

WATER TAXIS OFF AND RUNNING Page A3

TWO KILLED AFTER HOTEL BRAWL Page A4

RESCUED AT SEA

T&T Coast Guard officers find French family in raft off St Vincent

CAMILLE CLARKE | PAGE A5



Pascal Bazin, his wife Noelle, teenage daughter Melanie and their ten-year-old son Alexis at Coast Guard headquarters at Staubles Bay, yesterday. PHOTO: KARLA RAMOO

Coast Guard rescues drifting French family

CAMILLE CLARKE

A French family drifted aimlessly at sea in a rubber raft for four days, waiting to be rescued.

Pascal Bazin, his wife Noelle, teenage daughter Melanie and their ten-year-old son Alexis survived battering seas and strong winds, after their catamaran sank off Martinique on Thursday.

They were rescued, eventually, on Sunday night by T&T Coast Guard near to St Vincent.

On Saturday, an aircraft out of Barbados and Coast Guard officers from surrounding islands searched the area, but to no avail.

Using a flashlight and a flare, the Bazins were spotted floating in international waters, 85 nautical miles

Pascal Bazin explained that his catamaran began to take in water, and because he could not repair the damage, he decided that they should abandon the craft.

south-south-west of St Vincent, around 8.30 pm.

The family seemed in high spirits yesterday aboard the rescue vessel CG22 at Staubles Bay in Chaguaramas.

Bazin explained, through a translator, that his catamaran began to take in water, and because he could not repair the damage, he decided that they should abandon the craft.

Just before the catamaran went down, the family had to jump into a small rubber raft.

Melanie, who had collapsed from

exhaustion, had to be treated by Coast Guard officers, yesterday.

Up to last evening, arrangements were being made to have the family stay at a hotel.

Consul at the French Embassy, Andre Noe, said the family appreciated the efficiency and kindness they were given by the Coast Guard officers.

Lt Jean Baptiste praised the quick performance of the 20-man crew who plucked the Bazins out of the dark night in choppy water.

"We are not only protectors of the coast and anti-drug enforcement, we are serious in search and rescue.

"There were heavy waves and current and based on the co-ordinates given, we found them," Baptiste said.



The small life raft that protected the Bazin family while at sea for the past four days. PHOTO: KARLA RAMOO