

# Agencies rush emergency aid to cyclone-hit Myanmar

AFP, Yangon

Aid agencies rushed emergency food and water into Myanmar yesterday after a cyclone tore into the impoverished nation, killing nearly 4,000 people and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless.

Despite the devastation wreaked by tropical cyclone Nargis, the ruling junta vowed to press ahead with its controversial referendum this weekend on a new constitution, which critics say will entrench military rule.

The death toll from the cyclone that hit Myanmar over the weekend has reached 3,969, state television said Monday, warning that thousands more may have been killed in the disaster.

A further 2,129 people were officially listed as missing, it said, adding tens of thousands more

may have been killed in the remote towns of Bogalay and Labutta in the Ayeyawaddy (Irrawaddy) delta.

"According to the information that we have as of May 5, there could be tens of thousands dead in Bogalay township and thousands more dead in Labutta township," its spokesman Michael Annear told AFP in Bangkok.

The villages in the Ayeyawaddy (Irrawaddy) delta bore the brunt of Nargis, which came in from the Bay of Bengal and combined with a sea surge.

State media said nearly 98,000 people were homeless on the delta's Haing Gyi island alone, which is home to a navy base.

Richard Horsey, a UN official in Bangkok, said that several hundreds of thousands of people had been left homeless and without drinking water across a broad swath of the country.

"If we look at the emergency needs for shelter and drinking water, there are several hundred

thousand people who will need urgent assistance," he told AFP.

UN agencies and other international aid groups met Monday in Bangkok to begin coordinating a response in the country formerly known as Burma, where the military normally imposes tough limits on the activities of aid agencies.

The Thai military said it would airlift food and medicine into Yangon on Tuesday.

Spokesman Annear said Red Cross teams in Myanmar were already distributing essential supplies.

"We're redistributing supplies for those who need shelter, plastic sheeting to cover roofs, water purification tablets; we are currently procuring 5,000 litres of water, cooking items, bednets, blankets and clothes for those in most need," he said.



Myanmar referendum will go ahead, says junta

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's junta will go ahead with Saturday's referendum on a new constitution despite a massive storm, which killed hundreds of people and left tens of thousands homeless, state media reported.

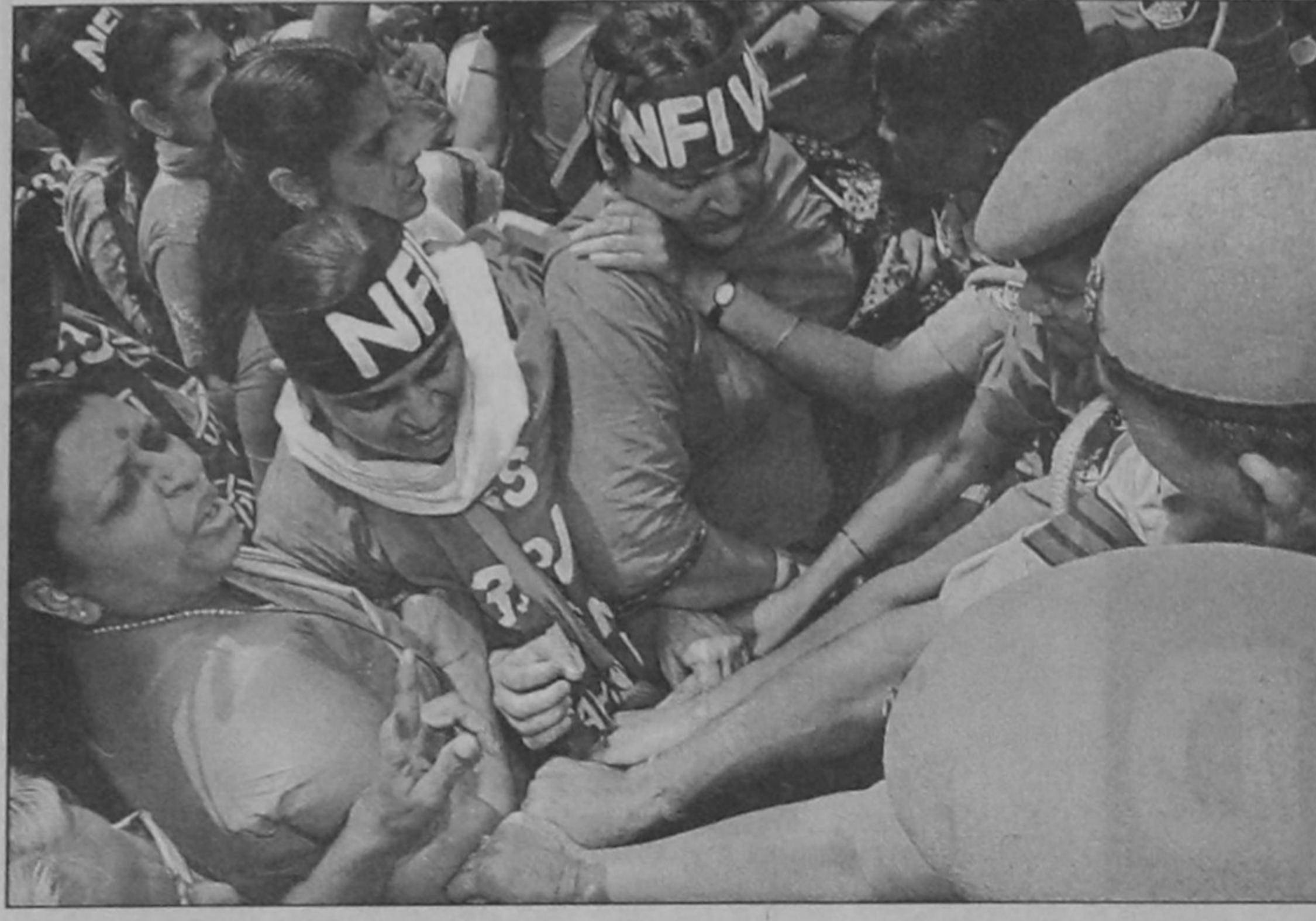
The government of Myanmar has announced that a referendum for the draft constitution will be held on 10 May 2008 and that multi-party democracy general elections will be held in 2010 in accordance with a new constitution, the New Light of Myanmar newspaper said on Monday.

The referendum is going to take place in a few days' time and the entire people of the country are eagerly looking forward to that," it said.

The paper said the authorities were "surprised" by a UN Security Council statement urging them to ensure an "inclusive and credible" political process and reminding them of their pledge to ensure a "free and fair" vote.

Residents rebuild their house after cyclone Nargis on the outskirts of Yangon on Sunday. Myanmar residents awoke to devastation after tropical cyclone Nargis tore through swathes of the country, battering buildings, sinking boats and causing thousands of casualties.

PHOTO: AFP



Indian women activists grapple with Indian police outside the Indian parliament during a protest in New Delhi yesterday. Activists were demanding the debate and passing of the Women's Reservation Bill, which provides for a 33 percent quota for women in parliament.

## Outcry as Lanka's defence chief urges censorship

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's main media rights group on Monday voiced alarm after the island's hawkish defence chief reportedly branded some journalists "traitors" and called for sweeping censorship.

The Free Media Movement said Gotabhaya Rajapakse, who has long demanded strict controls on how

news organisations are allowed to cover the war with Tamil Tiger rebels, "must be held accountable for his words and reigned in."

Quoting recent comments by Rajapakse to Sri Lankan state television, the FMM said he had "termised media 'traitors' those who published reports seen as harmful towards the security forces and military operations."

Rajapakse, the younger brother of President Mahinda Rajapakse, also "stressed that such media should be banned," the FMM said.

The group condemned what it said was a "regime that openly calls for censorship, clamps down on critical voices of dissent and is defined by vulture thugs who prey on independent media."

## Lok Sabha adjourns sine die without taking up women's bill

PTI, New Delhi

The three-month long budget session of the Lok Sabha was today adjourned sine die four days ahead of schedule amid protests by key governmentally CPI over its abrupt end and without taking up the Women's Reservation Bill.

The House was adjourned sine die by Speaker Somnath Chatterjee soon after the crisis over his action of referring the cases of 32 MPs, mostly from the BJP-led NDA, to the Privileges Committee for "disorderly conduct" came to an end.

Though the crisis was resolved, the Speaker used the occasion to remind the MPs "that instances of interruptions and forced adjournments and defying the authority of the chair do not help our common goal of public welfare and executive accountability".

During the session, the opposition sought to corner the government on the issue of rising prices of food grains and lack of availability of edible commodities in the Public Distribution System (PDS).

Amid intense debates on the situation arising out of rising prices, the government sought to allay the fears of an impending food crisis.

Soon after the House was adjourned sine die, CPI Deputy Leader Gurudas Dasgupta protested over the way the Congress and the BJP "came together" for adjourning the House ahead of schedule.

"This is a mockery of the Parliamentary system of democracy. The Prime Minister had assured us that the Women's Reservation Bill would be tabled in this session. This makes his assurance a hoax," he told reporters.

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## No breakthrough in Tibet talks

AFP, Shenzhen

China and the Dalai Lama's envoys agreed to keep the door open on dialogue after holding talks here Sunday, state media said, although no breakthrough in ending the Tibet crisis was reported.

The closed-door meeting was the first between the two sides in over a year and came after global leaders pressured China to reopen dialogue amid seven weeks of deadly unrest in Tibet that has marred the nation's Olympic

build-up.

"Chinese central government officials and the private representatives of the 14th Dalai Lama agreed to hold another round of contact and consultation at an appropriate time," China's official Xinhua news agency reported late Sunday.

However, the Chinese officials in the talks held firm on China's previously stated conditions for dialogue to succeed, positions that the Tibetan spiritual leader has already rejected.

## EC puts off Pak by-polls by 2 months

PTI, Islamabad

Pakistan's Election Commission yesterday postponed by two months by-polls to the national and four provincial assemblies scheduled for June 18 citing adverse security situation in the country.

This is the second time the by-polls are being put off after they were originally scheduled to be held on June 3.

Election Commission Secretary Kanwar Dilshad told reporters that the decision was made after the chief secretary of the North West Frontier Province sought a post-

ponement of the by-polls due to the security situation.

"The chief secretary said the polls should be postponed for some time due to the adverse law and order situation in the province. The Election Commission's decision was also influenced by the fact that budget sessions of the national and provincial assemblies are due," Dilshad said.

The Election Commission had reviewed the situation across Pakistan and decided that the "overall security environment is not so good", he said, adding a revised schedule will be announced later.

## Ten people killed in Baghdad clashes

AFP, Baghdad

At least 10 people were killed in overnight fighting between American forces and Shia militiamen in Baghdad, six of them in Sadr City, the US military said yesterday.

An Iraqi medic from Sadr City, the stronghold of anti-American cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, said that another 40 people, including women and children, were wounded in the clashes in the district.

A girls' school, which has been shut for more than a month because of the fighting was also damaged in overnight violence, they said.

The US military said six Shia militiamen were killed in Sadr City and four in Mansur, a mainly Sunni district of west Baghdad.

At around 10:00 pm (1900 GMT) on Sunday, three militiamen were killed by a Hellfire missile as they prepared to launch a rocket, military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Steven Stover told AFP.



## Fareast Islami Life Insurance Company Ltd.

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### CORRIGENDUM TO

### NOTICE INVITING RE-TENDER

Published in the Daily Star/ Daily Ittefaq / Naya Diganta dated May 4, 2008 for Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 4 (four) Nos. 1350kg Passenger Lift for 20-storied shopping-cum-office building for Fareast Tower at 35, Topkhana Road, Dhaka.

The Condition No. 01 as mentioned in the above advertisement may be read as under:

1. "Documentary evidence to prove that the tenderer has at least 3 (three) years experience in Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning and after-sales service and maintenance of the offered brand of lifts in Bangladesh."

Other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

Sd/-  
Managing Director

**DHAKA BANK**  
L I M I T E D

Head Office  
Dhaka

### Distribution of Bonus Shares 2007

This is for information of shareholders of Dhaka Bank Limited that the 25% Bonus Shares for the year 2007 have been credited to the respective Bo accounts of the Shareholders on May 5, 2008 whose names were recorded in the register of Members of the Bank on March 31, 2008.

The Bonus Shares of the shareholders, who have not provided us their BO A/C numbers, have been kept in the Bank's Suspense Account. The Shareholders are requested to provide us with their BO A/C numbers to enable us to credit their Account with the Bonus Shares through Central Depository System.

Sd/-  
Arham Masudul Huq  
Executive Vice President & Company Secretary