

UN seeks \$187m to aid cyclone survivors

AP, AFP, United Nations

The United Nations is seeking \$187 million to help an estimated 1.5 million cyclone survivors in Myanmar over the next three months, UN officials said Friday.

The world body appealed to donor nations to pledge money for food, water purification tablets, emergency health kits, mosquito nets, cooking sets, plastic sheeting and water jugs.

The money would go to 10 UN agencies and nine non-governmental organisations.

"If we do not act now, and if we do not act fast, more lives will be lost," said John Holmes, the under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs.

The United States, Britain, France and other nations called on Myanmar to ensure unfettered access for aid workers, release aid shipments, speedily grant visas and

waive importation fees.

"Myanmar intends to cooperate with the international community to address this great challenge," said Kyaw Tint Swe, Myanmar's UN ambassador.

But he added: "It has to be orderly and systematic."

In Atlanta, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said his staff was negotiating with Myanmar to break the gridlock, although he said leaders of the junta had "regrettably" not yet made direct contact with him.

"It's moving toward the right direction," he said.

The UN World Food Programme announced it had suspended aid shipments Friday after two plane loads of supplies were seized by government officials. WFP later reversed the decision and said the flights would resume Saturday.

That agency seeks \$56 million to feed 630,000 hungry people living in

badly damaged areas or temporary shelters.

Saturday's cyclone killed tens of thousands of people and left many more missing. Diplomats and aid groups have warned the number of dead could eventually exceed 100,000 because of illnesses and that the country is on the brink of a medical catastrophe.

Meanwhile, Asia's top security forum on Friday pressured Myanmar to quickly allow in international aid for cyclone victims amid complaints by foreign agencies that relief workers were being denied entry.

Senior officials of the Asean Regional Forum (ARF) meeting in Singapore said they understood the internal difficulties following the devastation of Cyclone Nargis, but more needed to be done to get international aid to the needy.

Nearly all delegates to the meeting of the 27-member ARF, which

includes China, the United States and the European Union, offered to help Myanmar, Janez Premez, who headed the EU delegation, told AFP.

"There is a certain understanding (of the difficulties), but now we are talking about three, four, five days after it has happened and we would expect that this thing would be ... dealt with in a better way," he said.

However, many of them also urged better coordination, including in issuing visas to foreign relief workers and getting supplies to affected areas.

A Southeast Asian foreign ministry official, who asked not to be named, said Myanmar officials were told that "the more you delay aid, the more serious the damage will be."

Tens of thousands of people were killed and more than one million left homeless by the storm, which struck the Irrawaddy Delta region a week ago.



Residents rebuild a house after the killer Cyclone Nargis near Bogalay Friday. Tens of thousands of people were killed after last week's storm, which struck the Irrawaddy Delta region hard.

Pakistan frees Baluch leader for peace

AP, Karachi

Pakistan's new government freed a prominent ethnic Baluch leader Friday as it tries to forge reconciliation in the restive southwest of the country.

Jubilant supporters crowded Sardar Akhtar Mengal, chief of Baluchistan National Party, as he left a Karachi hospital, where he was detained because of ill health.

Mengal was arrested in August 2006, accused of torturing two military intelligence officials. Supporters claimed the accusations were politically motivated.

Senior security official Arif Ahmed Khan said charges against Mengal have been withdrawn.

Pakistan's newly elected civilian government says it wants to promote dialogue with ethnic leaders in impoverished Baluchistan, scene of along-running insurgency.

The former government of President Pervez Musharraf launched military operations against Baluch rebels, who are fighting for more autonomy and a greater share of the revenues from natural gas and other resources extracted from the region.

Karnataka votes in high-stakes polls

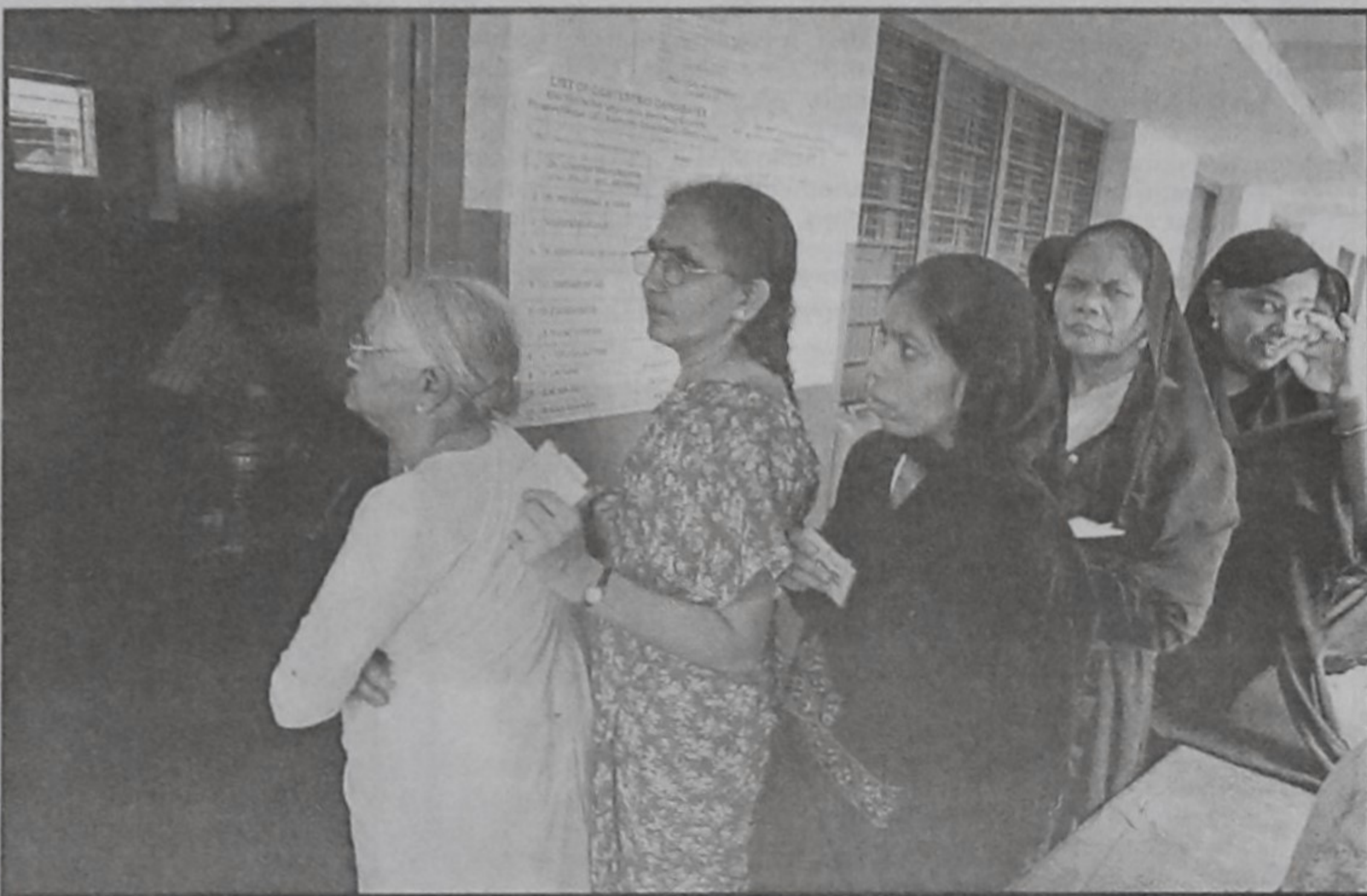
AFP, Bangalore

The southern Indian state of Karnataka voted yesterday in a crucial election Sonia Gandhi's ruling Congress party is battling to win as it faces a potential backlash over surging prices.

Ten hours of peaceful polling under heavy security ended at 5:00 pm local time (11:30 GMT).

About 45 percent of the electorate -- or more than 7.7 million voters -- voted in the first eight hours to choose 89 lawmakers for the 224-member Karnataka assembly, the Press Trust of India news agency reported.

The remaining seats will be filled May 16 and 22 in a three-phase election the Congress is fighting on a promise to rein in prices, provide a stable government and refurbish the state's shabby infrastructure.



Voters wait in a queue to cast their vote for the Karnataka state election outside a polling booth in Bangalore yesterday. The southern Indian state of Karnataka voted in a crucial election Sonia Gandhi's ruling Congress party is battling to win as it faces a potential backlash over surging prices.

NWFP govt reaches truce with Swat militants

THE DAWN, Mingora

Ahmad Bilour told Dawn in Peshawar.

Bilour, who headed the committee formed by the government to negotiate with the militants in Swat, said the two sides had decided to place "tega" -- a Pushto euphemism for truce.

He said the two sides had signed an agreement to stop violence in the valley, adding that the militants had agreed to stop attacks on security personnel and government installations. The government, in return, would stop search operations and arrests, he added.

"The ceasefire will hold until we reach a final agreement. We are going to Swat next week and will hold more talks with the militants," he said.

Bilour was assisted in the talks by home secretary Tepu Mahabat Khan, DIG Malakand Tanvirul Haq Sipra, Malakand DCO Arshad Khan, Swat DCO Waqif Khan, Swat PDO Waqif Khan, NWFP Minister for Environment Wajid Ali Khan and MPA Shamsheer Khan.

The militants' side, headed by Muslim Khan, spokesman for Maulana Fazlullah, included Mehmood, Ali Bakht, Nisar Khan, Maulana Mohammad Amin, Maulana Abdul Ghafor and Shamsheer Khan.

The ANP-led provincial government and militants in Swat reached a ceasefire agreement on Friday.

The breakthrough was achieved after three hours of talks between a government committee and a team of militants representing Maulana Fazlullah, the firebrand cleric who leads the militants in the valley.

The talks were held at the Fishing Hut Chakdara in Dir Lower amid tensions in Swat where during a joint operation conducted by army, Frontier Corps and police, 25 suspected militants were arrested in the Gado area of tehsil Kabal. A large quantity of arms and ammunition was seized.

The operation was launched on Friday morning after a roadside bomb blast and attack on a convoy of security forces. A police constable was killed and two others were injured in an exchange of fire.

Six militants had been killed near the Wennai bridge in Matta tehsil on Thursday night.

"We talked to each other, like Pashtuns do. They are also Pashtuns and they did understand that violence has brought nothing but bloodshed and mayhem," Senior NWFP Minister Bashir

Myanmar junta hands out aid boxes with generals' names

AP, Yangon

Myanmar's military regime distributed international aid Saturday but plastered the boxes with the names of top generals in an apparent effort to turn the relief effort for last week's devastating cyclone into a propaganda exercise.

The United Nations sent in three more planes and several trucks loaded with aid, though the junta took over its first two shipments. The government agreed to let a US cargo plane bring in supplies Monday, but foreign disaster experts were still being barred entry.

State-run television continuously ran images of top generals including the junta leader, Senior Gen. Than Shwe, handing out boxes of aid to survivors at elaborate ceremonies.

One box bore the name of Lt Gen Myint Swe, a rising star in the government hierarchy, in bold letters that overshadowed a smaller label reading: "Aid from the Kingdom of Thailand."

"We have already seen regional commanders putting their names on the side of aid shipments from Asia, saying this was a gift from them and then distributing it in their region," said Mark Farmaner, director of Burma Campaign UK, which campaigns for human rights and democracy in the country.

"It is not going to areas where it is most in need," he said in London.

State media say 23,335 people died and 37,019 are missing from Cyclone Nargis, which submerged entire villages in the Irrawaddy delta. International aid organizations say the death toll could climb to more than 100,000 as conditions worsen.

The UN estimates that 1.5 million to 2 million people have been severely affected and has voiced concern about the disposal of bodies.

With phone lines down, roads blocked and electricity networks destroyed, it is nearly impossible to reach isolated areas in the delta, complicated by the lack of experienced international aid workers and equipment.

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TENDER NOTICE (NATIONAL)

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare			
2	Agency	ICDDR,B			
3	Procuring Entity Name	Executive Director, ICDDR, B			
4	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka			
5	Invitation for	Package - 7			
		Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Indoor Type 1 X 3000 KVA & 1 X 2500 KVA Sub-Station Equipments for Vertical Extension and Renovation of Research and Hospital Building, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.			
6	Invitation Ref No & Date	Memo No. ICDDR,B/Mohakhali/Gyanaloy/08-04 Date: May 11, 2008			
7	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method			
8	Budget and Source of Funds	IDA through RPA (GoB)			
9	Project (if applicable)	Vertical Extension and Renovation of Research and Hospital Building - ICDDR,B, Dhaka, Bangladesh			
10	Tender Package Number & Name	Package - 7			
		Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Indoor Type 1 X 3000 KVA & 1 X 2500 KVA Sub-Station Equipments.			
11	Tender Publication Date	May 11, 2008			
12	Tender Last Selling Date	June 12, 2008			
13	Tender Closing Date and Time	June 16, 2008	Time: 11:00 Hours		
14	Tender Opening Date and Time	June 16, 2008	Time: 11:30 Hours		
15	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address			
	- Selling Tender Document	Cash Counter, Treasury Unit, Ground Floor, IPH Building, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.			
	- Receiving Tender Document	Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.			
	- Opening Tender Document	Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.			
16	Eligibility of Tenderer	(i) The tenderers shall be Manufacturer's / Sole Agents / Sole Distributors from eligible source countries. (ii) Tenderers, if local agent/distributor must have authorization certificate from the manufacturers / selling agent of the respective importable goods / materials. (iii) Tenderer shall have experience in the execution of similar nature of work for last 10 (ten) years in Bangladesh.			
17	Identification of Lots, Tender Security, Completion Time and Price of Tender Document				
	Pkg. No.	Identification	Location	Tender Security Amount in BDT (by Pay Order/Bank Guarantee)	Completion Time
	Pkg-7	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Indoor Type 1 X 3000 KVA & 1 X 2500 KVA Sub-Station Equipments.	ICDDR,B 68, Saheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212 Bangladesh	Tk.7,00,000.00 (seven lacs) in favour of ICDDR,B	180 (one hundred eighty) days from the date of Contract.
18	Name of Official Inviting Tender				
19	Designation of Official Inviting Tender				
20	Address of Official Inviting Tender				
21	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender				
22	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.				

icddr,b
KNOWLEDGE FOR GLOBAL LIFESAVING SOLUTIONS

M. Alam
Procurement Specialist
Gyanaloy Project