

Donors pledge cyclone aid at Myanmar conference

AP, Yangon

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he is hopeful "a turning point" has been reached in Myanmar's cyclone crisis as an international conference yesterday pledged tens of millions of dollars for some 2.4 million survivors in need of aid.

The one-day, 52-nation conference began on a note of optimism following promises by the ruling junta that foreign aid workers could enter the most devastated areas from which they were shut out since the cyclone struck three weeks ago.

Although some nations opened their pocketbooks, others gave notice that aid would be conditional on the generals keeping their promises of full access.

"I hope this marks a turning point in tackling the challenges facing this country," Ban told some 500 delegates at the conference convened with a minute of silence for the dead.

But he said international relief workers and medical teams from neighbouring countries must have "unhindered access to the areas

hardest hit by the disaster." Prime Minister Lt Gen Thein Sein, shedding his military uniform for the sarong-like "longyi" and traditional jacket, said international aid "with no strings attached" was welcome but only civilian vessels could take part in the aid operation.

"Relief supplies can be transported by land, air or sea. But if relief supplies have to be transported by water, civilian vessels can come in through Yangon port," he said.

US, British and French warships, loaded with humanitarian supplies, have been cruising off Myanmar's coast. Last week, state media said they would not be allowed into the country, citing fears of an American invasion to snatch the country's oil supplies.

Thein Sein, saying that 3,200 tons of humanitarian supplies have already been delivered from abroad, presented a long list of urgent needs, including temporary shelters, rice seeds, fertilizer, fishing boats and new salt factories.

Ban estimated the relief operation would last at least six months. "There is good reason to hope that aid to the worst affected areas

of Myanmar will increase significantly in the coming days. These needs must be funded, immediately," he said.

Myanmar's military regime has said it needs \$10.7 billion for cyclone reconstruction.

Washington's representative, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Scot Marciel, said the United States was prepared to offer much more than the \$20.5 million already donated. But the offer is on condition that international disaster experts are allowed to thoroughly assess conditions in affected areas to determine how best to help the victims.



United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon (R) shakes hands with Myanmar Prime Minister Thein Sein (C) after Thein spoke at the Asean International Pledging Conference on Cyclone Nargis yesterday in Yangon.

Torrential rain kills 10 in northwest Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

At least 10 people including six young children from the same family were killed as torrential rain lashed Swat Valley in northwestern Pakistan, police said Sunday.

The children, aged between eight and 12, died overnight when the roof of their mud house collapsed in Madyan town of the scenic valley, local police officer Jan Bahadur told AFP.

He said rain, which started late Saturday and continued into Sunday afternoon inundated several areas in the valley, the scene of recent Islamist insurgency.

Flash floods in Matta district killed two farm workers while two others were injured, Bahadur said, adding that a couple died when their car was swept away by rain water in Barikot area.

Swat Valley witnessed months of fighting between troops and rebels loyal to a cleric, Maulana Fazlullah, who was campaigning for the introduction of harsh Sharia law.

Under a peace deal signed last week the government agreed to gradually pull out troops and introduce an Islamic justice system, while the rebels said they would halt attacks and surrender arms.

BJP wins Karnataka election

CNN-IBN, New Delhi

The BJP's dream of ruling a southern state appeared certain on Sunday with results in Karnataka showing that it would emerge as the single-largest party in the state.

The last update from counting centres shows the BJP has won 111 seats, the Congress has won 78 seats, the JD(S) 28 seats and others have won 7 seats.

BJP chief Rajnath Singh said the party's victory in Karnataka was a milestone in its social and geographical expansion and made it the front-runner in the next Lok Sabha elections.

"The natural conclusion after the Karnataka victory is that not only has our public mandate increased, the party has registered a social as well as geographical expansion," he said.

"The BJP had so far been seen as a North Indian party. Now, we can say that the BJP is an all-India party," Singh said.

Senior BJP leader Venkaiah Naidu said the victory in Karnataka would have "national implications." "This is a breakthrough for BJP. This will be our gateway to the south and will have national implications. It should not be treated as a local victory as this is something

that will help keep the party flock together and improve our performance for the upcoming state and general elections," said Naidu.

Senior party leader Arun Jaitley sounded a note of caution, saying the party may be short of a majority to form a government in Karnataka. The party may be "a little away from the magical figure of 113" in the 224-member Assembly," he said. The BJP had won 79 seats in the 2004 Assembly elections.

BJP's chief ministerial candidate B S Yediyurappa was at his residence in Bangalore glued to TV channels and taking telephone calls from party agents from 48 counting centres across the state.

Former chief minister S M Krishna, who resigned as Maharashtra governor to lead the Congress' campaign in the state, took moral responsibility for the defeat. "I am sure that the BJP will get a workable majority and the Congress would act as a responsible Opposition," he told CNN-IBN.

Congress leader in charge of Karnataka Prithviraj Chavan said his party was defeated because secular votes were divided between it and the JD(S). The Congress had won 65 seats in the last elections.

37 killed in caste riots in India

AP, Jaipur

Authorities invited leaders of one of India's lowest castes for talks as the death toll rose to 37 Sunday from three days of bloody demonstrations over caste classification.

Police repeatedly opened fire on violent protests by the Gujjar community on Friday and Saturday in half a dozen villages and towns in western Rajasthan state.

The Gujjars are seeking to reclassify their caste to a lower level, which would allow them to qualify for government jobs and university places reserved for such groups. The government has refused.

The Hindu caste system, a hereditary social strata was outlawed soon after India's independence from Britain in 1947, but its influence remains powerful and the government awards aid packages to different groups.

Police in Sikandra town fired at protesters who torched a police station and two buses Saturday and shot and wounded a policeman, said Amanjit Singh Gill, Rajasthan's director-general of police.

Protesters also burned down a police station in the nearby village of Chandra Guddaji, Gill said.

Pak-Taliban accords must not put coalition soldiers at risk, says Nato

AFP, Kabul

Nato yesterday asked Pakistan to avoid agreements that "put our troops and our mission under threat" with peace talks on that side of the border linked to an increase in attacks in Afghanistan.

Adding to concern voiced by Afghan officials about Islamabad's talks with Taliban militants on its side of the frontier, Nato spokesman Mark Laity said Pakistan must take the alliance into account.

Top Pakistani militant leader Baitullah Mehsud said at the week-

end that he will continue "jihad", or holy war, in Afghanistan -- where there are 70,000 international troops fighting extremists -- while pursuing peace talks with Islamabad.

The new Pakistan government has meanwhile signed a peace deal with pro-Taliban militants in its Swat Valley, about 99 kilometres (55 miles) from Afghanistan.

"They have a sovereign right to make agreements," Laity said, adding however, "We have a right to answer if those agreements put our troops and our mission under

threat. "It is no real solution if trouble on one side of the Durand Line (the border) is merely transferred to the other side."

Forty-four of the nearly 50,000 Nato troops in Afghanistan to help the government fight a Taliban-led insurgency have been killed in action this year, Laity said.

"We have noticed an increase in activity in the eastern part of the country especially, which we believed can only be attributed to a reduction of Pakistan military activities," Laity said.

Foreign trooper among 16 killed in Afghan clash

AFP, Herat

A foreign soldier, two policemen and a dozen Taliban were killed in clashes in a key Afghan opium-producing area on Sunday, while three troops were hurt in a suicide blast in Kandahar city.

The soldier with the US-led coalition was killed "while conducting operations" in the southwestern province of Farah, the force said in a statement that gave no further details.

The operation appeared to be the same as one in the Bala Baluk district, in which Afghan police said two police officers were killed.

A dozen Taliban were also slain in the clashes, said police spokesman for western Afghanistan, Abdul Mutalib Rad.

Bala Baluk has seen a spike in Taliban activity in recent months. It is one of the Farah areas likely to see a strong increase in opium production, according to a UN drugs survey.

Officials say Afghanistan's production of opium and heroin, the largest in the world, is closely tied to a deadly Taliban insurgency that feeds off the drugs trade.

Meanwhile, the suicide car bomb blew up near Nato troops in the southern city of Kandahar, Canadian and Afghan officials said.

Three soldiers with Nato's multinational International Security Assistance Force were wounded, Isaf spokesman Major Martin O'Donnell told AFP. He did not provide the nationalities of the soldiers.



Female supporters of sacked Pakistani Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry dance on the arrival of Chaudhry at a lawyer's convention in Faisalabad yesterday. Pakistani lawyers have decided to step up their campaign for the reinstatement of judges deposed by President Pervez Musharraf last year.

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- Telecom industry audit experience would definitely be an advantage.
- Expert knowledge in use of data mining software such as ACL.
- Well developed skills in conducting Financial and Operation Risk Assessments, use of Audit Management Systems, Risk Assessment software, etc.
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- Internationally recognized professional accounting/auditing qualification obtained by examination (CA, CPA, ACCA).
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- Telecom industry audit experience would definitely be an advantage.
- Expert knowledge in use of data mining software such as ACL.
- Well developed skills in conducting Financial and Operation Risk Assessments, use of Audit Management Systems, Risk Assessment software etc.
- Excellent communication, supervision and time management skills and a proactive team player.

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Requirements :

- Should have a Bachelor's degree in Finance/Accounting/Business Management or equivalent.
- Internationally recognized professional accounting/auditing qualification obtained by examination (CA, CPA, ACCA, CIA).
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- Telecom industry audit experience is an advantage.
- Knowledge in use of data mining software such as ACL.
- Excellent communication skills, time management and a proactive team player.

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- A minimum of 4 years experience in Internal Audit.
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