

RACE AGAINST TIME IN MYANMAR

Time is running out for 1.5 million people in the worst-hit areas, aid groups say. With dead bodies in water and unsanitary conditions, the groups must now work fast to contain any possible epidemic.

» DISEASE THREAT

■ Waterborne diseases

Fears of water-borne diseases such as cholera, which is transmitted mainly through contaminated water and food. Unicef has reported diarrhoea in up to 20 per cent of the children living in some badly affected areas.



■ Measles

Fears of highly contagious diseases such as measles have prompted the government to begin vaccinating children in badly hit areas and temporary shelters.



■ Malaria and dengue fever

Possible outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever in three to four weeks, with mosquitoes breeding in stagnant water left from the storm.

■ Infections

Many are suffering from raw open wounds. Lack of medical supplies has forced people to use rusty sewing needles to close wounds.

» CAUSES OF POLLUTION AND DISEASE

Flooding and stagnant water create favourable conditions for the breeding of mosquitoes. Overcrowding facilitates mosquito bites and transmission. Myanmar is endemic for malaria and dengue fever.



1 Corpses and carcasses
Decaying bodies can be a source of harmful micro-organisms.

Bodies by themselves pose little threat to health, according to the World Health Organisation. But the disease-causing bacteria in them can be spread by insects and contaminated water.

2 Rotten food
from deserted homes and shops.

3 Overcrowding and inadequate shelter provide favourable conditions for acute respiratory infections, which can represent a major cause of death, especially for children.

4 Sewage from damaged water treatment plants and sewers.

5 Wells and drinking water contaminated by salt water and polluted river water.

Other dangers are scattered debris like broken glass and nails, and downed wires.

Water can also be contaminated by petrol and oil leaking from damaged vehicles.

Rescue workers piling up recently delivered relief goods to distribute among cyclone survivors in Hlaing Thayar township on the outskirts of Yangon on Saturday.



» AID PROMISED

Australia: A\$25 million (S\$32 million), a dramatic increase from an initial pledge of A\$3 million after UN appealed on Friday
Bangladesh: Two plane-loads of humanitarian materials and food, and a five-member military team
Britain: Up to £5million (S\$13.4 million) and an emergency field team
Canada: C\$2 million (S\$2.7 million)
China: 30 million yuan (S\$5.8 million), on top of US\$500,000 cash and US\$500,000 (S\$685,000) worth of supplies
European Commission: Two million euros (S\$4.2 million)

of fast-track humanitarian aid
France: 200,000 euros in aid. Naval ship arriving in the middle of this week to deliver 1,500 tonnes worth of aid
Indonesia: US\$1 million, and food, medicine and humanitarian aid
India: Two naval ships of food, tents, blankets, clothing and medicines. Two transport aircraft to bring supplies
Japan: US\$10 million, 28 million yen (S\$370,000) worth of supplies
Pakistan: Two plane-loads of relief goods including tents,

mosquito nets and medicines
Singapore: US\$200,000; rescue and medical teams
South Korea: US\$2 million in addition to an initial US\$100,000 in aid and supplies
Taiwan: US\$200,000 and rescue team
Thailand: One transport plane of food and medicine
Turkey: US\$1 million aid
United States: US\$3 million on top of US\$250,000 immediate emergency aid. First US military aid flight expected to arrive today

» AID RECEIVED

■ Seven flights of supplies from the UN World Food Programme (WFP) loaded onto trucks to be driven to the delta, including 38 tonnes of high-energy biscuits which were earlier confiscated by the junta. Eighth flight landed yesterday.
■ Two planes carrying supplies from French charity Medecins du Monde, which has received permission to distribute aid in affected areas.
■ Red Cross planes with 14 tonnes of shelter materials and 35 tonnes of other supplies, including medical supplies to provide three months of basic health care for 10,000 people.