

Myanmar Cyclone Survivors Describe Journeys of Horror and Misery

Associated Press

May 9, 2008



LABUTTA - Some survivors arrived half-naked, others wore clothes they scavenged from the dead. Myanmar's rice-trading town of Labutta the only spit of high ground in a vast watery landscape — has become a beacon of hope for tens of thousands who lived through the cyclone's fury, most losing homes and family members. The survivors made the journey in rickety wooden boats with makeshift sails fashioned out of blankets, dodging the bloated corpses of buffaloes and dead neighbors floating in the murky waters. See amateur video at <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/05/07/myanmar.aidcyclone/>

More than 60,000 people were killed or are missing in the densely-populated delta. "The information we are receiving indicates over 100,000 deaths," nearly five times Myanmar government estimates, said the U.S. charge d'affaires in Yangon, Shari Villarosa. As many as 1,000,000 residents are reported as homeless. But many buildings were still standing and helping hands awaited the new arrivals. Villarosa also said that about 95 percent of the buildings in the delta region were destroyed when Cyclone Nargis battered the area late Friday into Saturday. Villarosa said 70,000 people are missing in the Irrawaddy Delta, which has a population of nearly 6 million people. The official Myanmar government figure for the missing is 41,000. A United Nations official said that nearly 2,000 square miles (5,000 square km) of the hard-hit delta are still underwater.

Hundreds of people were taking shelter at the Aung Daw Mu temple, where the monks were seen making places for newcomers to sleep and drying out blankets as children scurried about. A private charity group, the Free Funeral Service Society, had set up a couple of big woks nearby to cook for the people. Meteorologists say the storm, which gathered strength in the Bay of Bengal and whipped up 120-mph (195-kph) winds, took an unusual track heading eastward into the densely populated delta region where a quarter of the nation's population live.

"It's a similar kind of land to New Orleans ... an intricate network of tidal creeks and openings that allow easy access for a powerful storm surge to penetrate right into populated land," said Andrews. "The impact was maybe the same order of magnitude as Hurricane Katrina...." Survivors in Kwa Kwa Lay indicated that two-thirds of the people in their village had perished and only about 300 people survived. All the houses are gone," said a resident of Kwa Kwa Lay. A neighboring village headman said only about 100 of 500 people had survived in his submerged town.

Food, clean water and medical supplies were in short supply in Labutta where some survivors resorted to drinking coconut milk. Those who made it arrived in boats filled to overflowing with survivors from the 51 surrounding towns and villages, most now under water. But each day there were fewer boats, partly because fuel supplies were disappearing. They plied through stinking waters, past bodies tangled up in mangrove trees and flattened thatch-roofed houses.

Labutta, located in a township with a population of 209,000 before the cyclone hit, was battered by the storm — its communications tower was knocked over, the spires on Buddhist pagodas were broken, windows were shattered. Debris was piled on the streets and roofs were torn off. But many buildings were still standing and helping hands awaited the new arrivals. Hundreds of people were taking shelter at the Aung Daw Mu temple, where the monks were seen making places for newcomers to sleep and drying out blankets as children scurried about. A private charity group, the Free Funeral Service Society, had set up a couple of big woks nearby to cook for the people.

1. In paragraph form, thoroughly describe modern day Myanmar following the recent horrific natural disaster.
2. What is the probability that one who previously resided in the Irrawaddy Delta is presently reported as missing?
3. What was the original population of the village Kwa Kwa Lay prior to the cyclone making landfall?
4. Assuming wind speeds, which gathered strength in the Bay of Bengal, increased by 35% how many more kph than mph would this escalation represent?
5. What is the percent of change amongst death tolls reported between Myanmar's government and the U.S. charge d'affaires in Yangon? Explain.
6. Upon completion of this assignment, how far have we progressed through the 2007-08 series of *The Daughtry Times*®? Express your answer as a fraction, decimal, percentage, and pie chart.
7. Complete *The Daughtry Times*® "Writing Guidelines" checklist on all questions requiring a written response. To ensure compliance, neatly label each component adjacent to your paragraph.
8. Complete *The Daughtry Times*® "Preliminary Reading Guidelines" checklist prior to reading the passage and clearly identify each essential component of the article (title, keywords in italics, etc.).
9. Using contextual clues only, explain the meaning of the italicized words: *beacon*, *pagoda*, and *spires*. Additionally, use each word in a sentence to demonstrate further comprehension.
10. In paragraph form, explain at least five legitimate and educational purposes behind *The Daughtry Times*®.