
Rainstorm threatens Myanmar earthquake recovery, death toll rises



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BANGKOK – As Myanmar continues to reel from a devastating earthquake that struck on March 28, forecasters have warned of a week of rain, thunderstorms, and extreme heat, hampering rescue efforts and worsening the plight of survivors.

State broadcaster MRTV reported Sunday that scattered thunderstorms and strong winds are expected nationwide. Authorities warned of potential landslides, lightning, hail, and

temperatures reaching 38°C (100°F) by mid-week. Many survivors, left homeless, now face the elements in makeshift shelters or out in the open.

The 7.7 magnitude quake, centered near Mandalay, has killed at least 3,564 people, injured over 5,000, and left 210 missing, according to a military government spokesperson. Significant damage has been reported across six regions, including the capital Naypyitaw.

Rescue operations have been disrupted by rain and power outages. An official from Myanmar Rescue Federation (Mandalay) said rescuers were forced to shut down electrical equipment due to wet conditions but vowed to continue efforts. The situation remains dangerous, with strong winds toppling unstable buildings.

The military-aligned Myanmar Fire Services Department reported five more bodies recovered from collapsed structures in Mandalay. Meanwhile, the Irrawaddy news outlet reported at least 80 bodies were found in the ruins of the Great Wall Hotel—though the figure remains unconfirmed.

Myanmar's ruling military, in power since a 2021 coup, says the quake damaged over 5,200 buildings, nearly 5,000 religious sites, 1,800 schools, 169 bridges, and 184 highway sections.

Communication breakdowns and damaged infrastructure are making full assessments difficult.

Despite the challenges, rescue teams continue their work amid growing fears of further destruction from weather-related hazards.