

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

## **'Me and You for Children of Myanmar': Bilaal Rajan, 11, rallies schools, others**

The new shoes you just bought or the GameBoy you are about to buy, could save the life or educate a child somewhere in the world, says 11-year old Bilaal Rajan, of Brampton, a UNICEF Child Ambassador, who put out a call May 13, to children to begin fund-raising for their Burmese peers hit by the May 3 Cyclone Nargis. Hundreds of Havenwood Public School children in Mississauga, Ontario applauded Bilaal's speech launching the campaign he is calling 'Me and You for the Children of Myanmar.'

Rajan's challenge encourages every child in Canada to raise up to Myanma \$105 for UNICEF Myanmar Cyclone Appeal. Children can participate in school-based fund-raising activities, download information and a challenge poster at the UNICEF Canada Web site at [www.unicef.ca](http://www.unicef.ca), or engage in their own fund-raising with family, neighbors and friends.

Even though News India-Times interviewed him just the day after the launch, Rajan said the response had been tremendous.

"All Peel Region schools are doing it, and New market, Aurora (townships). And we're still spreading the word," he said. (Peel Region covers Brampton and Mississauga in Greater Toronto where a significant South Asian population lives.) As this went to press, government estimates placed the dead as close to 40,000 but U.S. Charge d'Affairs to Burma, Shari Villarosa, told reporters on May 15, that the number could rise to 100,000.

UNICEF has been distributing food, water, medicines and shelter equipment since then, and says the lack of access to clean water and poor sanitation, inadequate shelter and poor nutrition pose particular threats to children.