

# 'It's all shattered dreams and broken hearts in Typhoon hit Philippines'

**MANGALORE:** "What remains and what lives there is shattered dreams and broken hearts," recalls Dr Edmond Fernandes, the Mangalorean physician who went to typhoon hit Philippines, as a member of the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA) for medical relief operations. The super typhoon Haiyan (locally called Yolanda) descended on Philippines on November 8 and lasted for a few days, triggering winds of 195 miles per hour (mph) strength, gusts of 235 mph and storm surge of 6 meter high, completely ravaging the eastern and central province of the country. The overall death toll has been estimated at over 5,000, apart from several thousands injured and a few thousands missing. The loss in terms of infrastructure is unmatched in the history of disasters the country has witnessed. "We, a team of seven doctors-comprising myself, two each Bangladeshis and Indonesians, one each Cambodian and Philippine were sent to Estancia in Illoilo to set up relief camps there between December 13 and 16," said Dr Fer-



nandes. Around 800 people including children and women were provided with treatment and most of them suffer from diarrhea, dizziness, fever and vitamin deficiency. Power outage was prevailing in the area for days and people were virtually out of life with no food, no shelter and nowhere to go. Estancia has also become a victim of a major oil spill that got struck due to the electricity poles falling over the oil barrels, added Fernandes. A significant part of the area had been cor-

doned-off considering the health threat it posed.

The Mangalore based doctor said though Philippines is used to witness typhoons and cyclones, this was one that the country ever encountered in terms of its devastating strength with which it swept across and caused havoc. It will take not months, but years for the country to bring back the typhoon ravaged areas to normalcy, he noted. AMDA Philippines President Dr Lynette Chua Villa spearheaded the re-



(Left) One of the many disaster-hit scenes at Estancia in Philippines. (Above) The relief team members.

lief mission in Estancia. Another team of AMD camped in Leyte and Tacloban, opened camps there and provided medical aid. Manila Chinatown Lions club, Illoilo medical society and the Philippine academy of family physicians also actively took part in the mission.

The 23-year-old Dr Edmond Fernandes was the only Indian representative and the youngest in the team. "This was my first-time experience as such. The Philippine experience has underscored the im-

portance of selfless humanitarian service in disaster hit places," he told *Deccan Herald*. He pointed that the civic awareness and disaster preparedness in India is in its infant stage and it is high time to take every kind of precautions leaving nothing to chances.

Dr Fernandes is also the CEO of Health Concern Foundation and hails from Hampkatta in Mangalore and is a house surgeon at Fr Muller's hospital here.

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