

Prepare for an earthquake, top developer urges government

Bangladesh sits in an active seismic zone, steps should be taken for safe rescue

MONJUR MAHMUD

As Bangladesh sits in an active seismic zone, immediate steps should be taken for retrofitting key installations for smooth rescue operation after a tremor, said SM Kamaluddin, a leading developer.

Administrative buildings, hospitals, fire brigade offices and schools should be retrofitted as part of an earthquake preparedness programme (EPP), he said.

Lying along the Myanmar-Assam tectonic plate that extends from the foothills of the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh is extremely vulnerable to quakes, both moderate and severe.

Continuing rescue operations will not be possible if the installations are hit, said Kamaluddin, chairman of Concord Group of Companies, a leading real estate firm.

"The best thing that we can do is to remain prepared for the



disaster that an earthquake brings in its wake," he said.

"We should keep in mind that people are not killed by an earthquake," he said, adding rickety buildings and buildings made of brittle materials like non-reinforced brick masonry falls in a heap, causing deaths.

"Buildings should be made of ductile materials so they can accommodate a good deal of ground motion without collapse."

Columns largely tend to get twisted in the open ground floor car park in apartment complexes in a quake, he said.

But it is possible to keep parking intact at the same time providing enough block walls with reinforcement and grouting so that adequate shear walls become available to withstand horizontal thrust, he added.

Such modification should be taken up soon in all such buildings already built or is in the process of being built, he added.

Pointing to another weakness in the buildings of Dhaka, he said solid bricks were used as in-fill materials between columns. These exert unnecessary load on the frame without contributing to their strength, making them vulnerable during an earthquake.

The Bangladesh National Building Code 1993 advocates the use of hollow bricks and hollow concrete blocks to reinforce structures against seismic thrust, Kamaluddin said, adding

unfortunately nobody paid any attention and brick buildings continued to thrive.

Brazil, a weak economy, has developed a design using reinforced concrete block masonry (RCBM) that enables it to construct high-rises in a configuration that protects individual building elements against earthquake force coming from any of the four directions, he said.

The effect of an earthquake on a building depends basically on its distance from the epicentre, soil type, total weight and structural type and configuration.

"We cannot choose where an earthquake might hit, this factor is beyond our control. It is practically not possible or cost-effective to try and change soil type. But designers and builders can control to a great extent the other two factors -- weight and structural configuration," he said.



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DCC gets back WB fund for bus-terminal development

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank (WB) finally agreed to give a fund of Tk 52 crore back to the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) for development of three inter-district bus terminals in the city, but with a condition for privatisation.

In a letter to the Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB), the WB said the maintenance and operation of Mohakhali, Syedabad and Gabtoli bus terminals must be handed to private firms,

said sources in the DTCB. The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) will implement the plan. The WB also said in the letter signed by its senior transport economist, Navid Qureshi, that Bangladesh-China joint company AML-JPCC employed by the RHD must start the development work in September with a June 30, 2004 deadline for completion.

The WB withdrew the fund of Tk 52 crore in February this year three years after awarding it, following a failure of the DCC to allocate the money to any private firm for the development of

the three bus terminals, now riddled with problems.

After repeated requests by the DTCB and DCC, the WB has this June repeated the condition of privatising the maintenance and operation of the terminals and set a new condition that the process of privatisation must be complete by August 31 this year.

On August 11, the DCC gave Mohakhali and Syedabad terminals to Rora Enterprise for maintenance and operation at Tk 47 lakh and Tk 1.48 crore and the Gabtoli terminal to Diba Enterprise at Tk 1.36 crore.

But the privatisation hit a snag when Communications Minister Nazmul Huda asked the DCC to stop toll collection at bus terminals and banned parking fees collected by the DCC. The DCC feared that private firms would not come forward to take charge of the terminals if parking fees were stopped.

A meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office on August 24 resolved the disagreement between the communications ministry and the DCC. Now the private operators can charge the buses fees for parking at the terminals.

"The privatisation of the bus terminals is heading towards an amicable settlement," said DTCB Executive Director Quamrul Islam Siddiqui.

"Both Rora and Diba enterprises have also been providing security to the organisations and individuals for long. We want to ensure safety of the passengers at the terminals. I hope these two companies will be able to smoothly maintain the bus terminals," said DCC Chief Engineer Dr Golam Quadeer.

"We are going to form a cell soon, headed by Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka to monitor the activities of the private operators," said the chief engineer.

Wasting city wetlands

Industrial waste and sewage are contaminating the city's lakes, and the way the lakes have been encroached was nothing short of a 'robbery'

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The wetlands of the city are being encroached due to non-implementation of Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan, said speakers at a press conference organised by Dhaka City Governance Program Committee of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA).

The Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (RAJUK) had embarked on a 20-year city development plan in 1992 to build Dhaka in a planned way.

After three years of hard work, the Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan was completed in 1995 at a cost of Tk 16 crore. The Government approved the plan in 1997.

Professor Muzaffar Hossain, a pioneer of Buriganga Bachao Andolon, Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed, vice president of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, Dr. Badiul Alam Mazumdar, convener of Dhaka City Governance Committee were present among the speakers.

They observed that the establishments and changes in Dhaka metropolis did not follow the Master Plan of 1995. In most cases the structures were built on encroached land. Illegals filling of the city's lakes and nearby wetlands were proofs of this trend.

The encroachment of wetland is not only a violation of 1995 Master Plan but also a breach of the wetland conser-

vancy law.

Professor Abu Sayeed remarked that the way the lakes have been encroached was nothing short of a 'robbery.'

The speakers also blamed industrial waste and sewage for contamination of the city's lakes. They also came down hard on the Ministry of Fisheries for leasing polluted waterbodies to private fisheries.

"People are getting ill by eating fishes from the contaminated water," said a speaker.

They also expressed deep concern regarding the lack of awareness among the citizens about the Master Plan and suggested distribution of a summarised version among the masses.

They Supervision committee should be formed to implement the master plan. The area of the wetland should be identified according to the master plan. Civil society should be involved in the implementation procedure of the Dhaka Metropolitan Development plan.



People are getting ill by eating fishes from the contaminated water.



The maintenance and operation of Mohakhali, Syedabad and Gabtoli bus terminals must be handed to private firms.

Courier, Marketprice & Outing

COURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Int'l Courier- 953636
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Enem Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Modhuban Courier Service- 9550884
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
Pacific Courier- 9568446
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249
Sky International service- 9660442
Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155
Union Courier Service- 9341722
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223

National
Asian courier Service Ltd.- 8313543
BAE- 9884851
Central Courier Service- 9881118
Confidence Courier Service Ltd.- 9567036
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9, 7100842-4
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975

TIPS
Do not forget to bring your rain-coat. and To avoid traffic

MARKET CLOSED

Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday
Elephant Road-Friday
Bishal Center-Friday
Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday
Polwell Market-Friday
BCS Computer City-Friday
Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday.
Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday
Stadium Market-Friday
Bangabazar Market-Friday
National Museum-Thursdays
Ahsan Manzil-Thursdays.
New Market-Tuesdays
Gausia Market-Tuesdays
Mouchak Market-Sunday
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesdays
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesdays
Eastern Plaza-Sunday
Farmview Super Market-Sunday
Muktijuddha Jadughar-Sunday
Dhaka Zoo-Sunday
Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

MARKET PRICE

Rice (Tk. Per Kg)
Miniket- 20-22
Pajam- 18.50-19.50
Najirshail- 21-22
Kaliijira- 33-34 (Polao)
Chinigura- 35-36 (Polao)
Dal (Tk. Per Kg)
Masur Dal- 42-44
Masur Imported- 38-40
Mug Dal- 42-44
Mug Imported- 38-40
Motor Dal- 36-38
Motor Imported- 20-21
Oil (Tk. Per Litre)
Mustard- 65-70
Soyabean- 41-42
Palm- 35-36
Coconut (Imported)- 100-160
Veg. Ghee- 42-44
Ghee- 300-320
Spices (Tk. Per Kg.)
Onion (local)- 20-22
Onion (Imported)- 16-18
Garlic- 30-32
Garlic (Imported)- 24-28
Ginger- 26-28
Ginger (Imported)- 26-28
Turmeric- 65-68
Turmeric (Imported)- 60-62
Dried (Red) Chili- 70-80
Green Chili- 20-24
Coriander (Dhania)- 30-32

Kaliijira- 8-10
Cumin (Jira)- 14-16
Cinnamon- 14-16
Almond- 60-70
Aniseed (Labanga)- 40-50
Black Pepper- 20-24
Vegetables (Tk Per Kg)
Potato- 13-14
Eggplant- 12-14
Green Papya- 6-8
Pumpkin (Misti Kumra)- 7-8
Patal- 10-12
Karalla- 14-16
Borboti, (Beans)- 14-16
Dherosh, (Okra)- 12-14
Kakrol- 10-12
Kachumukhi- 10-12
Kachurlati- 10-12
Cucumber- 10-12
Chichinga- 10-12
Jhinga- 12-14
Lal shak- 10-12
Pui Shak- 8-10
Green Banana- 6-8 (Per Hali)
Jali Lau- 10-12/Piece
PaniKachu- 8-10
Fish (Tk. Per Kg)
Rui (Local, Medium Size)- 230-240
Rui (Local, Small Size)- 130-140
Katal (Local, Medium Size)- 140-150
Katal (Local, Small Size)- 110-120
Katal (Imported, Medium)- 80-90

OUTING

Museum and Zoo
National Museum- 8619396-9
Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Friday 3 pm - 8 pm, Thursday closed
Muktijuddha Jadughar- 9559091
Open: 10:30 am - 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed
Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar- 8110046
Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Wednesday closed
Ahsan Manzil
Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed
Shishu Jadughar- 9666466
Open: 10 am - 6 pm, Sunday Closed
Sonargoan Jadugha

Sources: Agricultural Marketing Department