



## Over 3,000 killed as quake flattens Indonesian city

AFP, AP, Yogyakarta/Jakarta

More than 3,000 people were killed and thousands more injured when a strong earthquake rocked Indonesia's densely-populated island of Java on Saturday, the social affairs ministry said.

At least 3,002 people were killed, more than 2,500 people were seriously injured and at least 3,824 houses were destroyed, said an official at the ministry's disaster relief center in Jakarta.

The Red Cross estimated that

some 200,000 people had been displaced by the quake.

The powerful earthquake also sparked a tsunami scare, which sowed mass panic.

The 6.2 magnitude quake struck at dawn near the densely-populated ancient city of Yogyakarta on the main island of Java, rattling an area that had been on edge for weeks amid fears nearby Mount Merapi volcano would erupt.

Thousands of families fled their homes in panic as buildings shud-

dered and collapsed, many of them running for higher ground amid false rumours of a tsunami like the one that devastated the country in December 2004.

Many could not escape and were buried under the rubble of collapsed buildings or struck by flying rocks and debris as the quake devastated towns and villages across the south of the island.

One of the worst hit areas was the Bantul district south of Yogyakarta, which was flattened.

"There is only one house

remaining standing here, that of the head of the hamlet, but even that is not safe anymore as the walls are cracked," said Ngadiyo, 63, crouching in front of the rubble of his house in central Bantul.

"I have never gone through an earthquake this strong during my entire life," said his elder brother, Jodi Riwono, 46, who was trapped and unconscious under rubble before being rescued by a grandson.

Fourteen hours after the quake struck, the number of dead stood at 2,914, Social Affairs Ministry offi-

cial Sopar Jaya said, adding that two-thirds of the fatalities occurred in devastated Bantul.

"The numbers just keep rising," said Arifin Muhadi of the Indonesian Red Cross, adding that nearly 2,900 people were hurt.

Thousands were also left homeless, with more than 3,800 houses destroyed in Yogyakarta and Central Java provinces, Ginta said.

The devastating earthquake, which left thousands dead in Indonesia prompted swift offers of

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## ADP's local share to rise as aid flow falls

BIDS suggests even smaller ADP

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is preparing an annual development programme (ADP) for the coming fiscal year, which will have a larger share of local resources, since the inflow of foreign aid is likely to slow down in the election year.

The estimated ADP size for the next fiscal year that will be placed today at the National Economic Council (NEC) meeting has been set at Tk 26,000 crore. The amount of local resources in it has been set at 57 percent or Tk 14,812 crore while foreign resources will make

up about 43 percent or Tk 11,188 crore.

The current fiscal's ADP is also being revised and the allocation has been set at Tk 21,500 crore in which local resources constitute 50.43 percent while foreign resources constitute 49.57 percent.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) in a policy recommendation report suggested a maximum allocation of Tk 24,000 crore for ADP in the 2006-07 fiscal contradicting the planning ministry proposed allocation of Tk 26,000 crore.

Sources said apart from project aid the government gets foreign aid as budgetary loan, which the government spends in its ADP. Since this is the election year, chances of getting foreign loans are very slim as those loans are usually tagged with different reform conditions.

Within the estimated foreign resources, Tk 863 crore has been estimated as gettable as budgetary support in the next fiscal, which is about 34 percent less than the amount that was received for the current year's revised ADP.

Although there was a policy loan

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## Indonesia's twin woes

AFP, Jakarta

The Indonesian region devastated by a violent earthquake is also facing the threat of an imminent eruption by the Mount Merapi volcano, two incidents that are closely linked, according to experts.

Yogyakarta, Indonesia's ancient capital and now a densely populated university city, lies almost exactly halfway between the rumbling volcano and the epicentre of Saturday's violent earthquake.

While the "Mountain of Fire", whose belching of searing clouds of gas and volcanic dust has forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of villagers, lies 35km to the north, the quake's epicentre is 37 kilometres to the city's south.

Both are created by a single

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A woman, left, breaks down as she lost her loved ones in the devastating earthquake in Java, Indonesia; villagers, right, try to remove the rubbles of a collapsed building hoping to find survivors trapped underneath the flattened structure.

## Low pay, poor working condition led to unrest

Int'l labour body sends letter to PM

MD HASAN

Low wage structure and imposition of inhuman conditions on the workers by the garment factory owners sparked the recent violence in the apparel sector of Bangladesh, said International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF).

ITGLWF expressed grave concern at the recent unrest in the garment industry and urged Prime

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## TRADE UNION IN RMG UNITS Owners ready to allow, but fear fallout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Apparel manufacturers yesterday said they have no problem in allowing trade unionism in their factories but they fear political influence on trade unions and untoward incidents due to union activities.

They consider trade unionism as the right of workers but they hesitate to allow it because of their past experience, they said.

Leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) gave their opinion at a roundtable on 'Problems and Solutions of the Garment Industry' in the capital.

The Prothom Alo organised the roundtable, conducted by its Editor Matiuur Rahman.

Other speakers at the roundtable urged the garment factory owners to allow trade unions in the sector. It is the right of workers to organise themselves on various issues, they stressed.

"You (garment factory owners) may consider allowing trade unionism since it would then be easier to deal with a large number of workers on a certain issue," said Latifur Rahman, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI).

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Water-starved residents of Dayaganj Sweepers' Colony in the capital scramble for water supplied from the tanker of a private organisation yesterday.

## QUAKE IN JAVA Hasina, Morshed shocked

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan have expressed deep shock at the huge loss of life and property in a deadly earthquake in Indonesia.

In a condolence message yesterday, Hasina offered her heartfelt sympathy for the bereaved families and prayed for the salvation of the departed souls.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan in a statement last night said Bangladesh is ready to stand by the brotherly people of Indonesia.

"We offer our deepest condolences for those killed in the tragic natural disaster and pray for quick recovery of those who suffered

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## MEGHNAGHAT-2 PROJECT DELAY Inept contractor fails to manage financiers

SHARIER KHAN

Instead of signing the Land Lease Agreement (LLA) and start implementing the second Meghnaghat 450 megawatt power project, inexperienced company Orion and its partners are killing time for the last four to five months as they are unable to find financiers for the project.

Industry insiders say that Orion and its partners under the banner of BON Consortium made repeated attempts to secure funds but those have been turned down by a number of financiers since the cabinet purchase committee in August last year okayed the grossly

flawed bid for the project.

Following the purchase committee meeting, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman told the press, "We have approved a power tariff of 2.78 cents for the Meghnaghat-2 power project. This project will be completed in 24 months."

But the project is now running nearly one year behind that schedule.

The country is now reeling under a power shortage of over 2,000 MW. Delay of this project due to contractor's incompetence will worsen the crisis in the near future.

Orion, which is close to the alternative centre of power of the government and has been awarded

various contracts in different sectors in the last couple of years, got the power project contract in the name of BON consortium comprising Dubai-based trading company Belhassa and German power company Steag.

The BON however says it is delaying the signing of the LLA as Titus gas authorities are lingering negotiation on the Gas Supply Agreement (GSA), another component of the power project relating to gas supply and its rate.

The first Meghnaghat project was implemented by US company AES at a cost of \$170 million and AES charges the government a

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## President's condition improves

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Condition of President Iajuddin Ahmed, who is now undergoing treatment at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore, has improved, but he has developed fresh complications.

"The president's cardiac output has increased, but pulmonary oedema reduced," Press Secretary to the President M Mokhlesur Rahman Chowdhury said yesterday.

"The president has opened his eyes," a Press Information Department (PID) handout said quoting the press secretary.

The press secretary said cardiologist Moris Chu and Cardiac Surgeon MC Chong have expressed their

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## Trader, his driver shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified criminals at Paltan in the city shot dead a businessman and the driver of the vehicle he was travelling on last night.

The dead are Harunur Rashid, 35, a cosmetic trader and resident of 40/B Purana Palatan, and Mosharrif Hossain, 32, driver of Harun's elder brother's car.

Police suspect he might have been involved with hundi trade and had connections with an international smuggling syndicate.

Harun was going to the airport on his way to Singapore riding his brother's car around 9:10pm when two people on a motorbike stopped the car a few yards from his home.

Police said as the criminals claimed themselves to be policemen, Harun rolled down the window and the assailants shot him and Mosharrif at point-blank.

A witness said he heard at least

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## Correction

In our yesterday's story headlined "Uncertainty, fear still haunt them," it was inadvertently mentioned that a worker was "fearing further harassment by the Korean owners of the factory" -- Universe garment. In fact, Universe is not a Korean-owned factory and the Koreans have no relations with it. We regret the error.

## CAMPAIGN FOR COMPETENT CANDIDATE EC empowerment, voter awareness stressed

Regional dialogue also speaks against nomination of just-retired civil servants, asks CEC to go

RAFIQ HASAN, from Barisal

Speakers at the regional dialogue at Barisal yesterday suggested empowerment of the Election Commission and creating awareness among the voters for nomination of honest, competent and courageous candidates for the next general elections.

Non-government research organisation Centre for Policy Dialogue arranged the discussion in collaboration with The Daily Star, the Prothom Alo and private television Channel i on accountable development and election 2007.

Emphasising the need for bringing a change in the character of national politics, the speakers said the electorate should also be honest and conscious for ensuring a corruption-free general election.

They demanded resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner M A Aziz taking responsibility for preparing a false voter list and sought accountability for an expenditure of Tk 220 crore that was allocated for making the fresh



voter lists.

They suggested the dialogue organisers hold discussion with the political leaders to convince them about the necessity of honest and dedicated candidates. The political parties should nominate competent long-time political persons as candidates instead of black money holders, they felt.

The civil servants should not be allowed for candidature unless they spend at least five years in politics after retirement, they said.

They also demanded registration of political parties and holding national election at the government expenditure to remove corruption and influence of black money in the election campaign.

The speakers said autocratic military rulers earlier suspended the constitution and destroyed the democratic institutions in the country.

They urged the politicians to guard against any communal activities and ensure safety and security of the minority community before and after general elections.

Presided over by educationist Prof Syed Aminul Haque, 94 persons took part in the six-hour-long discussion and freely expressed their views about the reform of the Election Commission, change in the election system and democratic practice in the political parties.

Extending full support to the civil society initiative, they put forward scores of suggestions for bringing necessary reforms in the election system and change in politics.

They vowed to spread the message of the dialogue to grassroots level and involve villagers in the campaign for honest and competent candidates.

Cross sections of people including local political leaders and activists, lawyers, teachers, businessmen, government officials,

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