



Most buildings are vulnerable to tremors.

No observatory yet for tremor, no logistics

SULTANA RAHMAN

Geological Survey of Bangladesh (GSB), the only organisation to monitor earthquakes in the country, does not have a Seismic Observatory Station (SOS), Accelerograph and Micro Seismic Zonation (MSZ) which are absolutely essential for a vulnerable city like Dhaka.

An earthquake of a moderate scale could spell disaster for Dhaka with hundreds of structures facing collapse. In the worst case scenario rescue workers will be unable to launch any salvage operation as they lack supporting logistics, observed the GSB. Officials of the GSB warned that up to 75 per cent of the city's population and more than 80 per cent of the buildings are extremely vulnerable to tremors which hit any time as Bangladesh is smack in the middle of South Asia's most seismic zone.

GSB director Mir Fazlul Karim said that only two official seismic hazard-zoning maps are available in the country, of them one was published in 1979 and another revised in 1993. Both maps provide data on the basis of seismic co-efficiency, and were prepared using historic records of earthquakes. But they require further updating.

"So far no detailed maps have been

prepared as modern facilities for earthquake research and monitoring are yet to be developed in the country," Karim claimed.

According to sources, the GSB proposed a project to the ministry of Disaster Management and Relief last month to measure seismic condition of country's major cities including Dhaka and Chittagong at a cost of Tk 15 crore. It includes essential instruments to observe and monitor the earthquake.

"The GSB has proposed the concept paper recently. The Disaster Ministry and European Union are in talks to mobilise the funds," said a top official of the ministry on condition of anonymity.

"The ground deformation during past earthquakes indicate that the magnitudes determined by United State Geological Survey, Indian met office and other global seismic networks were lower than the actual scale. That's why we need our own station for accuracy," said Karim.

GSB sources said at least four SOSs in different cities including Dhaka are needed to observe and monitor the quake. The SOSs should be linked to global seismic networks. Moreover, micro seismic zonation is also essential to assess earthquake accurately.

Most buildings in Dhaka has been constructed on weak foundations and with poor filling materials without any regard to the dangers that may lie ahead. The present expansion of the city is being conducted on low-lying areas, notably on depressions and flood plains. According to experts these low-lying areas are being filled with 'loose organic sediments' such as fine-grained sand, clayey silt, organic clay, even peat and garbage.

Neither the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Disaster Management Bureau nor the Fire Brigade and Civil Defense have trained manpower or equipment to manage a massive disaster like an earthquake.

"Dhaka is an urban area where the minimum salvage requirement is unavailable. The city doesn't have a single crane that can lift 100 tons of debris," said a senior official of Fire Service and Civil Defense.

Experts say that Dhaka is one of the most earthquake-risk places in the region. Risks of tremor in the capital has become higher with the rising skyline as thousands of multi-storied buildings and apartments have been erected in and around the city without conforming to the safety requirements in the event of a major earthquake.

DCC wakes up to rampant theft of road signs

No new road signs will be installed until they are made 'theft proof'

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) will not install new road signs until a preventive mechanism is developed to contain thefts of expensive road signs on city's recently renovated roads, DCC officials said.

The officials acknowledged that lack of proper road signs is not only confusing motorists but also causing accidents and consequent loss of lives and property.

Most thefts took place on Mirpur Road, Panthapath, Dar es Salam Road, Rokeya Sarani, Kemal Ataturk Avenue and Pragoti Sarani, where expensive repair works were carried out over the last three years under Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP).

"We had installed hundreds of these road signs around the city's recently renovated roads but 90 percent of them vanished within a few days," said an engineer of DCC's Traffic Engineering Department.

Sources in the Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) said that it was the responsibility of the DCC to install and maintain these signs.

"The signs cost the exchequer crores of taka and whenever they were stolen, the DCC should have taken measures to prevent theft," said an official of the DTCB.

DCC sources however implied the traffic department officials,



who earlier following a talk with the DCC promised to keep vigil on the road signs that were installed under a Tk 100 crore component of the DUTP, should also have borne the responsibility.

The road signs have good resale values in the markets as they are made of aluminum with reflective coat, officials said. They, however, failed to say if they had made any

attempt to make the road signs 'theft proof' like Dhaka WASA, which, in the wake of widespread theft of previous steel made slabs of the manholes, opted for concrete made slabs, making those almost impossible to steal.

In most cases increasing drug abuse in the city is responsible for the thefts, Ansar Uddin Khan, Deputy Commissioner, Traffic

North told the Daily Star adding, "Mohammadpur police have recently caught some drug addicts attempting to steal the road signs."

"We should think of installing theft proof signs on the road," he added.

"We have written to the police to keep vigil about thefts of road signs," the DC traffic said.



The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has shifted the 'dumping ground' for illegal rickshaws from Old Airport area to an open space behind the LGED office at Agargaon. A drive to drive out illegal rickshaws is on, said a DMP official.

useful telephone numbers

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,
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

Dolphin Courier- 9558802
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751
World Runner Express Ltd. 9112068, Fax - 880-2-9112068

TIPS

Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between 4pm and 10pm

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

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

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6 A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6 B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6 C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattr
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoi	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahai
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard - Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan