

Experts repeat call for quake preparedness



A moderate earthquake may destroy 28 percent of the city's buildings

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Experts predict the deaths of at least 96,000 people, injuries of 1,27,000 and the collapse of 28 percent of the existing buildings if a moderate earthquake hits the city.

They told a workshop the direct loss would be worth a billion dollars in case of an earthquake of medium intensity.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Bangladesh Earthquake Society (BES) jointly organised the workshop on "Earthquake Preparedness and Management" last week to create awareness on earthquakes, sponsored jointly by Care Bangladesh and USAID.

Speaking as the chief guest, President of BES Jamilur Reza Chowdhury said according to seismic zoning map of Bangladesh, Dhaka comes under the highly earthquake prone zone 2. He said the consequences of earthquakes would be disastrous, as Dhaka's population is at least 10 million.

Mohammed Abu Sadeque, sub-divisional engineer of Public Works Department (PWD), clarified the reasons and effects of earthquake in his presentation. He quoted scientists anticipate a severe earthquake in Bangladesh.

"The Indo-Australian Tectonic Plate on which Bangladesh is situated is moving northward. However, the movement had stopped for the last hundred years storing 'strain energy' under the outer shell of the earth. This will cause a big earthquake in Bangladesh at any moment," he said.

Sadeque said there may be fissures on the ground and apart from complete damage, buildings may have settlements, tilts or cracks as effects of an earthquake. Fire is another problem that follows earthquakes.

"Dhaka is more likely to have fire hazards during earthquakes as its gas supply is piped," he said.

'Liquefaction' was highlighted in Sadeque's presentation as a major factor left by

earthquake where the soil becomes soft like quicksand and unable to hold any structure.

However, Dr Mehdi Ahmed Ansary, secretary general of BES, said in presentation that a comparatively less chance of 'Liquefaction' exists in Dhaka.

"Only 10 per cent of ground in Dhaka may suffer from it as underground water level is gradually decreasing," he said.

The experts said proper earthquake proof construction is necessary for the safety of city dwellers. They said some construction firms try to convince people saying their buildings can bear an earthquake measured 7 or 8 on the Richter Scale.

Dr. Ansary added that an earthquake measuring 1 on Richter scale might get amplified into 2.5 because of the soil quality of a particular area.

He also said lack of maintenance of old buildings is posing a threat to city dwell-

ers. "I have seen some buildings in old town, built on narrow columns with no foundation," said Dr. Ansary. "Imagine the plight of 20 lakh residents, if an earthquake takes place," he said.

Speakers said that in most cases an old building with no earthquake precaution could be made earthquake resistant by retrofitting. "It may cost 10 to 15 percent of the total construction cost of the building," said Abu Sadeque.

Experts said 90 percent of the city dwellers would be safe if buildings were constructed to meet the earthquake consequences. They stressed for a disaster management system for the other 10 percent. They added there should be stringent laws compelling builders to follow the earthquake code.

Syed Ashrafur Alam, Md. Morshed and Mashhur R. Khandekar also made presentations. Tapan Kumar Das Gupta, DCC's chief town planner and Habibur Rahman, chief executive officer, also spoke.

Venus to move across the sun tomorrow

Witness the spectacular celestial event from city's playground

FAIZUL A TANIM

June 8, 2004 will add to scientific history when Venus will move across the sun -- an event that can be seen from the Earth in a six-hour spectacle and can be viewed from the Kalabagan Krira Chakra playground.

A repeat of this event named the "Transit of Venus" is the first of its kind in the present millennium with the previous taking place in 1882. No-one alive today has witnessed such an astronomical event.

Bangladesh Astronomical Association (BAA) in collaboration with Kalabagan Krira Chakra will organise the magnificent display through Celestron 8-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope and other equipment.

"On June 8, half the world will be able to see the tiny black dot of Venus moving across the disc of the sun. Given a cloudless sky, all one needs is a sun filter to follow the display for hours with unaided eyes," says Mash hu rui Amin, Mohakash Barta's editor and BAA member.

"People who want to follow Venus' glide across the sun from their homes can do so using an exposed fresh (unused) x-ray film which is light darkish

black. This big sheet must be placed over the lens of the telescope or binoculars before watching. It will prevent direct rays of the sun from causing permanent damage to the eyes. The viewfinder of the telescope should be covered as well," he added.

The venue will be equipped with a projection system with a white screen to have a wider view of the transit, Amin said.

This Venus transit will be seen after about 120 years. The times when the movement can be observed are 11:14am, 11:33am, 2:16pm, 5:01pm and the last touch -- the transit -- will be at 5:20pm on June 8, BAA officials said.

THE TRANSIT CHART

Year	Start	End
1518	4 Jun	5 Jun
1526	2 Jun	2 Jun
1631	7 Dec	7 Dec
1639	4 Dec	4 Dec
1761	6 Jun	6 Jun
1769	3 Jun	4 Jun
1874	9 Dec	9 Dec
1882	6 Dec	6 Dec
2004	8 Jun	8 Jun
2012	5 Jun	6 Jun
2117	10 Dec	11 Dec

Sources: Internet

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is yet to take any steps to recover the designated parking area in Karwan Bazar, 'secretly' leased in 1999 to a group of shop owners.

DCC officials said the parking area situated on the eastern side of the Karwan Bazar kitchen market could not be recovered due to legal complications.

Meanwhile, the entire Karwan Bazar area with hundreds of big businesses, offices and the largest wholesale vegetable market is constantly choked with haphazardly parked vehicles. During peak hours wrongly parked vehicles occupy more than 50 percent of the main roads.

Rajuk officials said the area was earmarked for parking facilities when Karwan Bazar commercial zone was planned.

Just after the parking space was leased to the shop owners, newspaper reports prompted the then Prime Minister's Office to ask the DCC to cancel the lease, the DCC officials said.

The PMO's directive was a 'thorn in the flesh' for DCC officials in the estate department and high-ups, who took hefty sums from the shop owners, sources said.

As soon as the DCC issued a cancellation order, the shop owners went to court and obtained a stay order without DCC's Legal Wing appealing against it. The case is still pending.

"Shop owners have now hung a signboard about the court order and the DCC officials are happy to keep quiet about it," said a source at the DCC zonal office.

"We cannot do anything until the legal complications are over," said a DCC official in Nagar Bhaban.

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HEALTH

Hospitals

Heart

National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD),
- 9130800, 9122560-59

Burn

Dhaka Medical College Hospital
Burn Unit-8626812-6

Cancer

National Cancer Institute-8014914,
8826561-65
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib
Medical University-8612550-4,
8616641-50

Diabetes

Diabetic Research Hospital
(BIRDEM)- 9661551-5,
8616641-50

Mother & Child Care

Shishu Hospital- 9119119,
8116061-62
Azimpur Mother & Child Health

Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980

Eye

Islamia Eye Hospital-9110794,
9119315
National Eye Hospital- 8117202,
8114807

Dental

Dental College -9002035

Orthopaedics

National Orthopaedics (Pangu)
Hospital- 9114075, 9112150

General

Dhaka Medical College Hospital-
8626812-6
Rushmono General Hospital-
8317819
Holy Family Hospital-
83111731-25
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib
Medical University Hospital-
8612550-4, 8614545-9
Bangladesh Medical College &
Hospital- 8115443, 9118202,

Shamarita Hospital- 9131901
Suhrwardy Hospital -- 9130800,
9122560-69
Salimullah Medical College
Hospital -- 7310061-4, 7319002-6
Cholera Research Hospital
(ICDDR)- 8811751-60
Monowra Hospital 8319802, 8318135

Blood Bank

Red Crescent Centre- 9116563
Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040
Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061,
7310061, 7319022
Dhaka Medical College Hospital-
8626812-9

Eye Bank

Sandhani International Eye Bank-
8614040

Ambulances For Dead Body

Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail
9336611, Gandaria 7319808,
7318166,
Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

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-Thursaday
Ahsan Manzil--Thursaday.
New Market-Tuesday
Gausia Market-Tuesday
Mouchak Market-Sunday
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
Farmview Super Market-Sunday
Muktijuddha Jadughar-Sunday
Dhaka Zoo-Sunday
Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

MARKET CLOSED

TAXI CAB

Yellow Cab

Navana 9558065

Salida 9344477, 0171620881

Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191

Cab One 7113282-3

Nihon 8624741-2

Orion 9347277

Anudip 8125285 and 8127611

Capital 9352847

Union 8130485

Kool 0171826731

Black Cab

Cab Ex 9358401

Cabline 8321162

JBS Cab 019364575

Sajan 018126036

Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611

TRAIN TIMING

Subarna Express
Mahanagar Prabhati
Mahanagar Godhuli
Turna
Parabat Express
Joyantika Express
Upaban Express
Tista Express
Ekata Express
Upakul Express
Padma Express

Leaves Dhaka at 4:00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am
Leaves Dhaka at 3:05 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 6:30 am
Leaves Dhaka at 12:30 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 9:30 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am
Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 6:00 am
Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm

Reaches Chittagong at 10:15 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 2:55 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 9:11 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 7:05 am
Reaches Sylhet at 2:30 pm
Reaches Sylhet at 9:20 pm
Reaches Sylhet at 6:40 am
Reaches Bahadurabad at 1:05 pm
Reaches Bahadurabad at 11:55
Reaches Noakhali at 1:35 pm
Reaches Jagannath at 2:30 pm

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