

Strong quake could kill 1.3 lakh in city

Says study

UNB, Dhaka

Some 131,029 people will die instantly while another 32,948 will need to be hospitalised if an earthquake of 7.5 magnitude from Madhupur Fault jolts the city, according to a government study.

In case of an earthquake of 8 magnitude on plate boundary Fault-2, the study says, there will be about 69,874 instant deaths while 81,916 others will need to be admitted to the hospital. In this case, the casualties will be less despite stronger tremor because of distance of its epicentre.

Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) under Food and Disaster Management Ministry conducted the study with the help of Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC).

United Nations Development Programme (JNDP), UK Department for International Development (DFID) and European Commission provided financial support for the research project conducted from February 2008 to August 2009.

The study reveals that at least 10 major hospitals in the capital will be destroyed completely and another 241

hospitals and clinics partially in case of a quake of 7.5 magnitude, mounting pressure on the city's other hospitals and clinics to treat the possible huge injured people.

It shows that only 24,242 hospital beds will be available on the day the quake will jolt for the use of the already-admitted patients and earthquake-injured people after the 7.5 jolt, which is only 41 percent of the demand.

A week after the shake, only 54 percent of the beds will be available for the use while 72 percent after a month, the study said.

About 37,625 hospital beds, which are only 63 percent of requirement, will be available for the treatment of injured people on the day of an earthquake of 8 magnitude.

About 76 percent of the beds will be back in service after a week while about 87 percent will be fully operational after a month.

Citing four low to moderate tremors, the study apprehended that moderate to strong earthquakes may hit three major cities -- Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet -- as those are situated in three separate risky earthquake zones. "Millions of people will die if a strong earthquake jolts

the regions."

Prof Shamim M Haque, contingency planning project manager of Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP), however, declined to comment on the outcome of the study.

ASM Maksud Kamal, national adviser on Tsunami, Cyclone and Earthquake risk of the CDMP, told UNB that Dhaka is highly vulnerable to earthquake under Madhupur Fault, as the phenomenal urbanisation, density of population and high-rise structures are growing fast here.

"We can't even imagine how much casualties and economic losses will be there in the city in case of a powerful tremor originating from Madhupur Fault," he said.

Maksud Kamal, a professor of geological sciences of Dhaka University, alleged that most of the healthcare centres in the capital have been set up for just making money, not for providing healthcare services, as no contingency plan taken for recovery from earthquakes.

"The highly vulnerable healthcare centres were constructed without any plan and maintaining the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC)," he said.

Australia overtakes US as biggest polluter

AFP, Sydney

Australians have overtaken Americans as the world's biggest individual producers of carbon dioxide, which is blamed for global warming, a risk consultancy says.

British firm Maplecroft placed Australia's per capita output at 20.58 tons a year, some four percent higher than the United States and top of a list of 185 countries.

Canada, the Netherlands and Saudi Arabia rounded out the top five. China remains the world's biggest overall greenhouse gas polluter, followed by the United States.

Maplecroft added that China and India's per person carbon production came in at just 4.5 and 1.16 tons respectively, in sharp contrast to their big overall figures.

"Australia has about five times the per capita emissions of China for instance but China produces over 20 times the carbon emissions of Australia because China has such a huge population," University of Adelaide professor Barry Brook told public broadcaster ABC.

"So you can play around with these numbers all you want but ultimately what matters is the total global carbon budget," he said.

"And unless humanity as a whole can find solutions to that problem, then all of that petty bickering amongst nations about who's more or less responsible isn't really going to be very helpful."



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Some home-bound passengers wait for their bus at Gabtoli Bus Terminal in the city yesterday to go to their village homes early to enjoy the Eid holidays with their near and dear ones.

Voter list update postponed for four days in Bandarban

UNB, Bandarban

The work on taking photographs for updating voters' lists at Chaikhang union in Alikadam upazila here was postponed for four days following an assault on an election officer yesterday.

Sources said during the visit of district election officer Quamrul Hasan in the union, local Awami League leaders raised allegations that the names of Rohingyas were being included in the voter list.

They requested Hasan to take immediate measures for stopping inclusion of the Rohingyas in the voter list.

The AL men expressed dissatisfaction over his reply and, at one stage, dragged him out of the office and beat him up.

Taken aback by the turn of events, other officials, including upazila fisheries officer, ran away to safety.

Being informed about the incident, Deputy Commissioner Mizanur Rahman postponed the voter list updating work for four days.

Two bodies recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Metropolitan Police recovered two unidentified bodies, including a teenage girl, from two separate areas on and around the Rajshahi University (RU) campus yesterday.

A girl of bright complexion with long hair was found lying near the Fine Arts department around 12:30pm.

Two fine arts students took her to RU Medical Centre first. She was then rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared her dead.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Khairul Islam said, "Her autopsy was performed and we are investigating to get her identity as well as the cause of the death."

In another incident, police recovered the body of a middle-aged man lying in a sugarcane field behind the RU mass grave around 2:00pm.

Quoting the inquest report, SI Ershad said the body was severely stabbed twice on left side of his neck.

Two separate cases were filed with Rajpara and Motihar police stations.

'Edn policy to help build efficient future generation'

BSS, Dinaipur

Prime Minister's Adviser on Education Dr Alauddin Ahmed yesterday said the proposed education policy is aimed at building efficient, competent and brilliant future generation.

He said the policy has been formulated to create equal opportunity of education for all citizens irrespective of their economic status.

The adviser was speaking as the chief guest at a function in observance of the 10th founding anniversary of Hazi Danesh Science and Technology University.

With vice-chancellor of the university Prof M Afzal Hossain in the chair, the function was addressed, among others, by State Minister for Land Advocate Mostafizur Rahman, Nurul Islam Sujon, MP, Iqbalur Rahim MP, Monoronjonshil Gopal MP,

Sultana Bulbul MP and Prof Syedul Haque Chowdhury.

Dr Alauddin said the new education policy should dispel the notion that the vocational education is a medium of education for the poor section of people.

Moreover, he said, the policy also addresses the issues of quality education and participation of local government in the education system.

The new policy includes three-tier education system, free primary education from class one to eight, secondary education from class nine to twelve and higher education.

Dr Alauddin said the proposed policy should be made public so that people can give their opinion on the policy.

He said the policy would introduce pre-primary education at the primary schools for the children above five years. It suggested creation of new

posts of teachers and ensuring new classrooms.

Secondary examinations would be held after class twelve. The students in general education, madrasa and technical education will follow the same syllabus in Bangla, English, Math, IT and Bangladesh Studies, he said.

The policy would introduce four-year degree course replacing the existing three-year course. Students after graduation will be qualified to apply for all jobs expecting higher-level teaching profession, he said.

Dr Alauddin expressed his optimism that the students of the university would make greater contribution to building a Digital Bangladesh.

The day's programme started with hoisting of national and university flags. It was followed by distribution of cakes and sweetmeat marking the occasion.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of a taskforce of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) visit a kitchen market at Shantinagar in the city yesterday to monitor prices of essentials.

Travel bills drain out public money

FROM PAGE 1

witnessed submissions of such inflated bills by members of the erstwhile prime minister's entourage, and how they forged rubber stamps, letterheads and other documents for the purpose. He said there was a nexus between officials of the accounts department and the travellers, while the highest audit office usually did not raise questions despite knowing that the bills were inflated, as they were scared of the PMO staff.

Former cabinet secretary also an ex-adviser to a caretaker government, Dr Akbar Ali Khan, termed the practice as 'unethical' and said the officers themselves should have returned the extra money. "If the officials don't readjust the fund by themselves, the government should stop paying their salaries. The government may also garnishee the amounts from their salaries," he told The Daily Star.

Although the issue is not new, it came to the fore only because an official investigation revealed that a number of officials of the foreign ministry and the chief adviser's office of the immediate past caretaker government submitted inflated bills which were two to three times higher than usual market prices for tickets and freight charges.

According to a latest official document about government officials' overseas trips, many in the immediate past interim government drew excessive amounts of money through the malpractice. The Daily Star has collected a list of 24 such officials, who were attached to the immediate past chief adviser's office (CAO), and all of whom drew highly inflated amounts of money for air

travel.

The list reveals that many junior officials, who were entitled to economy class tickets, submitted airfare bills higher even than business or executive class tickets. The audit section of the foreign ministry recently detected that a submitted bill for a one-way ticket on a certain route was even higher than the original market price of a roundtrip ticket on the route.

The list shows that a cameraman drew Tk 2,73,067 travelling on Dhaka-Singapore-Colombo-Dhaka route in 2008. He also drew Tk 3,16,515 for a Dhaka-Dubai-New York-Dhaka trip the same year. Both rates of airfares are much higher than what were the market prices back then.

For a Dhaka-Dubai-Dhaka trip, an army major, who was a deputy director at CAO, drew Tk 1,11,705 while a civil servant of the deputy secretary rank drew Tk 1,41,951 for a Dhaka-Singapore-Dhaka trip, both of which were much higher than the market prices of tickets for those routes.

There were even incidents at CAO of two different officials drawing different amounts for airfares on the same route. A female deputy secretary drew Tk 1,19,103 for travelling on Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur-Dhaka route while a deputy press secretary to CAO drew Tk 1,08,310 for the same purpose.

The list further shows that a junior official of CAO drew Tk 1,67,048 for travelling on Dhaka-Hong Kong-Beijing-Dhaka route while another official, who was in Special Security Force (SSF), drew Tk 3,23,075 for a Dhaka-Dubai-Dakar-Dhaka trip, both of which were much higher than the market prices of

tickets for the routes.

An executive producer of Bangladesh Television, who travelled with the chief adviser, drew Tk 4,47,472 for a Dhaka-Dubai-London-Dakar-Dhaka trip while a director of SSF drew Tk 1,92,162 for a Dhaka-London-Dakar-Dhaka trip. Again the claims were much higher than the actual market prices of those tickets.

According to a foreign ministry audit report, a former director general (admin) of the ministry, submitted a claim for about Tk 2.82 lakh as advance travel allowance for Dhaka-Cairo airfare, which should not have been more than Tk 1.5 lakh even for a round trip on that route.

The sources said the audit department took a number of attempts in vain to stop the malpractice, as senior officials of the ministry remained silent about it for reasons unknown. In many cases, the sources said, audit officials incurred the wrath of senior officials because they had pointed out to them irregularities in submitted bills.

The irregularities came up for discussion in an inter-ministerial meeting recently, which put forward a number of suggestions for saving public money by putting an end to the rampant malpractice. The audit department listed 15 officials who had inflated their bills, and alleged that the government incurred a loss of Tk 22 lakh for the malpractice. The list includes ambassadors, directors, senior assistant secretaries, and counsellors of the foreign ministry.

It reveals that a top official of the foreign ministry showed Tk 2,53,483 as airfare for a Dhaka-Canberra trip while an

ambassador claimed Tk 1,94,579 for a trip from Dhaka to Pretoria. Another ambassador showed Tk 2,49,290 for a Dhaka-Washington trip. All of which were inflated rates of airfares.

The inter-ministerial meeting was presided over by Arastoo Khan, additional secretary (treasury, debt management and administration) to the finance ministry. It was attended by officials from finance and foreign ministries as well as from the Office of Comptroller and Auditor General.

The meeting found that the travel fares claimed by the officials were quoted according to the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) fare chart, which widely differed from the competitive market prices of tickets sold by airlines or their sales agents. The meeting suggested strict compliance with financial rules, especially the 'Standards of Financial Propriety', for claiming travel expenses.

"Officials cannot claim fares on the basis of the IATA chart or quotations collected from any travel agent. As the officials get sufficient time while being transferred from their stations, it is better for them to collect the tickets at least a month prior to moving to new places," the meeting said in its recommendations.

It also decided that the chief accounts officer of the finance ministry will request the officials to correct their already submitted bills in accordance with the market rates of airfares. "If the officials do not comply with the request, the chief accounts officer will take steps to realise the extra amount from the officials concerned," the recommendations added.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI) and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) during a raid seize bottles of adulterated juice at a fake juice-producing factory at Jatrabari in the city yesterday.

মতিঝিল • সুট ও অফিস • সাইজ ৬২-১১৭৫ বর্গফুট • ০১৯১১২০০৭৫৩	ওয়ারী • সোফা (কর্ণার টুট) • সাইজ ৯০-১১৮০ বর্গফুট • ০১৯১২৭৮৬৫৩০	মগবাজার • এ্যাপার্টমেন্ট (কর্ণার টুট) • সাইজ ৭৪০-১১৪০ বর্গফুট • ০১৯১৪৪৯৬৬৯৯	পলগুয়েল কারনেশন • ডেক সোফা জাভা ও বয়ান হাউজ বিকর • উল্লেখ্যেদের অপেক্ষার • ০১৯১৪৪৯৬৬৬১
উত্তরা (ৱেকি জাট) • সেজ-৩, ৪, ১০৩ ১০ • সাইজ-১৩০৫, ১৪০০ • ১৬৫৭, ২৫৬০ বর্গফুট • ০১৯১৪৪৯৬৬৬৯	গ্রীণরোড • অফিস/এ্যাপার্টমেন্ট • সাইজ ১২৯৭-১৪১০ বর্গফুট • ০১৯১৪৪৯৬৬৬০	বনানী • সিঙ্গেল এ্যাপার্টমেন্ট • সাইজ ২০২০ বর্গফুট • ০১৯১৪৪৯৬৬৬৫	কাকরাইল • এ্যাপার্টমেন্ট (কর্ণার টুট) • সাইজ ১৮১০ বর্গফুট • ০১৯১৪৪৯৬৬৬৮

বিল্ডিং ফর ফিউচার লিঃ
 প্রধান কার্যালয় : পান শিবি, (৩য় ও ৪র্থ তলা), ৭৬ ও ৭৬/১, পাশ্বে, ঢাকা-১২১৫, ফোন : ৮১৫৯১৬৭, ০১৫২৪১৪০০০, ফ্যাক্স : ৯১০৭৪৫০

Work on the 500-bed world-class cancer hospital is now at the final stage. Much more fund is needed to commission the massive hospital. You too can rekindle a ray of hope in heart of a large number of cancer patients.

Kazi Rafiqul Alam

Dhaka Ahsania Mission
 House # 19, Road # 12 (New), Dharmada, Dhaka.
 Phone : 8119521-22, 8115909, Fax : 8113010
 E-mail : dam.bgd@ahsaniamission.org

Underconstruction world class 500-bed Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital

Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital Fund