

6.0 quake rumbles ocean off Brazil coast

AFP, Washington

A 6.0-magnitude earthquake rumbled yesterday in the Atlantic Ocean off Brazil, US-based seismologists said.

The quake, which struck at 1308 GMT, was located along the central mid-Atlantic ridge, 1277 kilometres east-northeast of Natal, Brazil.

The United States Geological Survey said the quake was at a depth of nine kilometres, but there were no immediate indications of a tsunami.

Khaleda

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and the son broke into tears after a few moments' silence.

Tarique, also the senior vice-chairman of the party, has been living in London for treatment since September 2008.

Before his departure, he alleged that the law enforcers tortured him in custody causing serious injuries to his spinal cord.

Tarique was arrested on March 7, 2007 on charges of corruption during the militarily-backed caretaker government. He went to London after his release on bail on September 3, 2008.

Khaleda, also leader of the opposition, left Dhaka on Saturday for London en route America and reached Heathrow International Airport at 8:15pm local time that day.

Leaders of the party's UK chapter welcomed her at the airport.

Outside, the UK chapter of the ruling Awami League waved black flags protesting her visit.

Immediately after she left, supporters of the two parties engaged in a clash when police picked up two BNP activists.

The BNP chairperson was scheduled to address a party meeting at Grosvenor Hall yesterday afternoon (10:00pm Bangladeshi time).

During her weeklong stay in London, she will meet with political leaders and government officials.

Khaleda is scheduled to meet Alan Duncan, minister of state for International Development, and Labour Party leader Ed Miliband. She will also attend receptions hosted by Anne Main, chairman of all party parliamentary group and Tower Hamlets Mayor Latifur Rahman.

Rid case

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official went to court with photocopies of the seizure list.

Special Public Prosecutor Mahmud Hossain Jahangir told The Daily Star that the court could not start the trial due to the negligence of the fifth parliament.

Yesterday, Judge Mohammad Abdul Majid of the court did not record the statement of the complainant. He fixed July 3 for the next hearing and asked him again to show up with original copies of relevant documents.

The case was filed in August 2009 against five people of Rid Pharma in connection with using toxic diethylene glycol in manufacturing paracetamol syrup that caused deaths to 28 children the same year.

Accused Mizanur Rahman, managing director of Rid Pharma and his wife Sheuly Rahman, one of the directors of the company, are now out on bail. They appeared before the court yesterday.

Three other accused, Abdul Gani, a director of the company, and two pharmacists Mahbubul Islam and Enamul Haque, are still absconding.

On March 9, the court framed charges against the five in connection with manufacturing the adulterated syrup.

Four similar cases were filed against Adflane Pharmaceutical Ltd, Polymech Laboratories Ltd, BCI (Bangladesh) Ltd, and Rex Pharmaceutical in 1992. They too had allegedly used diethylene glycol in the manufacture of paracetamol syrup.

This claimed the lives of 2,700 children.

None of these companies have been brought to book.

Khoka stays

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general Khandaker Delwar Hossain in June 2008, as Khoka and some prominent others of the committee sided with the reformist faction.

A press release issued last night also announced city BNP leader Abdus Salam as the member secretary, and 19 others as joint conveners. Twelve of these joint conveners are councillors of Dhaka City Corporation. However, there is no regular member in the committee.

Controversial leaders like former law maker Salauddin Ahmed, popularly known as 'dour Salauddin', Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, who is an accused in the 2009 BDR mutiny case; and SA Khaleque were appointed joint conveners of the committee.

When asked about inclusion of controversial leaders in the committee, Khoka said they are just victims of a conspiracy by the ruling party, adding that all of them are former lawmakers.

Other joint conveners are -- Kazi Abul Bashar, MA Qaium, Abu Sayeed Khan Kokhan, Abdul Latif, MA Mazid, Shamsul Huda, Sazzad Zahir, Shahabuddin, Ali Asgar Matabbar,

Shahabuddin govt

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transitional period ended with the enactment and commencement of the constitution on December 16, 1972.

According to the verdicts, the parliament by amending the constitution cannot insert anything afresh in the fourth schedule, after December 16, 1972.

Article 150 of the constitution provided the transitional provisions in the fourth schedule to protect various laws, actions and decisions made, taken or pronounced between the Declaration of Independence on March 26, 1971 and the commencement of the constitution on December 16, 1972, according to the SC verdicts.

But military usurpers of state power, Gen Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad, abused the transitional provisions to ratify and validate their extra-constitutional takeovers of state power and all related illegal activities.

In doing so, they made parliaments pass the fifth and seventh amendment acts, and inserted separate clauses in the fourth schedule in 1979 and 1986 respectively.

Later, the eleventh and twelfth amendment acts also inserted new clauses in the fourth schedule in 1991 to ratify Justice Shahabuddin's regime, and the formation of the fifth parliament.

In light of the SC's observations made in the verdicts on the fifth and seventh amendments, the special committee is in favour of deleting the clauses from the fourth schedule which were inserted after December 16, 1972.

Asked what will be the fate of the clause inserted to ratify the interim regime led by Justice Shahabuddin, the premier said, "The special committee will work on it and find ways in this regard."

The parliamentary special committee already agreed in principle to propose for necessary changes in the constitution for blocking illegal usurpation of state power, and ex post facto legalisation of such extra-constitutional takeovers and all related illegal activities.

Contacted by The Daily Star, some members of the special committee said, the clause inserted by the eleventh amendment act still has effects, and they are concerned about it as it ratified the regime of Shahabuddin Ahmed.

"We will examine how the regime and Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed can be legally protected from any adverse situation after deleting the specific clause from the fourth schedule," said a committee member.

BSF kills 1

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Locals said BSF troops of

Goborodhakampat

Swarupnagar in India shot rubber bullets over a group of Bangladeshi cattle traders who were returning from India around 4:30am.

Among them, Milon fell to the ground being hit by a rubber bullet. The troops then hacked him to death into their territory and left the body on the Boikari border.

The other cattle traders, however, managed to flee the scene.

Lt Col Enayet, commanding officer of 41 battalion of Border Guard Bangladesh, confirmed the incident.

The World Meteorological Organization is set to meet from today for the WMO.

The PM will fly for Canada on May 18 through Paris. She will return to Paris on May 25.

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Health complex

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switched off.

Kalapara upazila health complex was built on 1.75 acres of land of four plots in 1949. Later, the complex was shifted to another location.

Dr ASM Jahirul Hasan, upazila health and family planning officer, said he had informed the higher authority about the matter and also filed a GD (general diary) with Kalapara Police Station on May 7.

"Police did not take any action," Dr Hasan alleged.

Ishaq Ali, officer-in-charge of the police station, admitted recording the GD. "We will provide lawful support if they [health complex authorities] want to evict the intruders from khas land," he said.

Asked why he did not take any action yet, the OC said the authorities filed only a GD, not a case accusing anybody.

Patuakhali Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Yusuf said he had already asked the UNO (upazila officer) to stop the market construction.

They suggested speed reduction, using seatbelts, introducing child seats in

"If anybody wants to possess a piece of khas land, he or she has to follow legal procedure," he said. "Nobody can just take over a public land."

Tax holiday

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As per the plan, the industries that are currently entitled to the facility will continue enjoying it until 2013.

The minister also said that after 2013 everybody will have to pay tax whatever small the amount may be.

About providing lawmakers with duty-free cars, he said the government frequently faces embarrassing situation in this regard.

Earlier, steps were taken to provide transport facility to the MPs instead of giving them duty-free cars but that could not be done. Muhith, however, did not mention the reason.

He urged the lawmakers to have second thoughts themselves about enjoying the opportunity.

In yesterday's meeting, many businessmen raised the demand for duty-free import of equipment for agriculture and other sectors.

He was speaking as the chief guest at the meeting organised on the occasion of signing a tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) involving \$7 million between the SC, the law ministry and the United Nations Development Programme at SC's Judges' Lounge yesterday afternoon.

Justice Khairul Haque will go into retirement on May 17. The SC will remain closed that day [tomorrow] due to holiday on the occasion of Buddha Purnima.

The existing management of the SC has detected the reasons behind the increase in pending cases. The main reason is that the HC benches normally used to issue rules and other interim orders like bail and stay in different cases but did not dispose of those cases quickly.

Following such interim orders, the cases used to hang for long and the backlog used to grow up day after day. The SC official said the case backlog was created although there are around 90 HC judges. And against that backdrop the chief justice took steps to resolve the problem.

The chief justice asked the HC judges a few months ago to dispose of cases at least two days a week, following which the rate of disposal has improved, the official added.

Eminent jurist Dr Shahdean Malik said such high rate of disposal is very encouraging, which seems a clear result of the initiative of the chief justice.

He however said some institutional measures should be taken immediately to sustain the success.

The chief justice may

complete his three-year tenure in Bangladesh. Moriarty was confirmed as US Ambassador to Bangladesh by the Senate on March 13, 2008 and sworn in on March 26, 2008.

Moriarty is expected to leave Dhaka sometime in December, sources said.

President Obama on May 13 announced a number of appointments to key administrative posts including Dan Mozena.

The nomination will now be sent to the Foreign Relations Committee of the US Senate for hearing, which will give final conformation after his testimony.

Mozena is currently a professor at the National War College.

From 2007-2010, Mozena served as the US ambassador to Angola. A career member of the senior foreign service, Mozena served as director for the Office of Southern African Affairs from 2004 to 2007.

Mozena was deputy chief of mission in Lusaka, Zambia, where he began his foreign service career in 1986 in a murder case.

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The SC rejected a petition filed by Siddique for quashing the proceedings against him.

It came up with the verdict after Siddique filed the appeal against the HC verdict, which declared the seventh amendment to the constitution illegal, but neither acquitted him

Govt takes heart

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and roads, rapid increase in the number of motorised vehicles, mixed traffic flow, poor traffic-control law enforcement, inadequate infrastructural safety features and inadequate post crash response."

He also said they detected some barriers in prevention of road accidents, including inadequate legislative provisions, enforcement of laws and acts, absences of coordinated strategic policy and action, lack of human-friendly road environment and difficulty in accessing emergency health care.

The National Steering Committee for Injury Prevention on the decade of action on road safety made a series of recommendations to halve the casualties on roads by 2022.

They suggested speed reduction, using seatbelts, introducing child seats in

the vehicles, helmets for motorbike riders, low-cost engineering measures, safer vehicles and ensuring pre-hospital and trauma care.

The committee suggests introducing nationwide single emergency telephone number, providing early rehabilitation and support to injured victims, introducing insurance schemes and investigation into crashes and providing legal response.

A few government wings already started their work in this connection.

The BRTA and the health department sources said they have taken some initiatives which will help the country to achieve the goal.

BRTA Director (enforcement) Tapan Kumar Sarkar said, "We have started holding rallies with drivers in different districts to create road-safety awareness and so far we have held them in

18 districts."

He said they formed a committee in each district for holding such rallies by June.

To provide post accident medical care, the health ministry already established trauma centres on highways including at Feni, Comilla and Sylhet, said AK Jafor Ullah, adding that they will establish 12 more trauma centres along highways across the country.

The government is going to introduce highway ambulances to transport victims to nearby trauma centres and hospitals, he added.

He said the committee will take steps to install central reservations on all regional and national highways to reduce accidents. They will also take steps to incorporate road safety education in text book curriculum.

British marine killed in Afghanistan blast

AFP, London

A British marine was killed yesterday in a blast in southern Afghanistan, the Ministry of Defence in London announced.

The trooper, from 42 Commando Royal Marines, was killed by an improvised explosive device while searching a compound in the Nad-e Ali district of Helmand Province.

The Royal Marine was involved in an operation which was investigating suspected insurgent activity in a number of compounds in the Loy Mandeh Wadi area," said Task Force Helmand spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Tim Purbrick.

OMS starts

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One buyer will be able to buy three to five kg of flour at a time and also be able to buy rice at the same time, says a press release of the food and disaster management ministry.