

BUILDING CODE

Govt plans to enforce it countrywide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sunday's 6.9 magnitude earthquake whose epicenter was in Sikkim prompted the government to enforce the building code across the country by engaging local government bodies.

Committees comprised of the local government bodies and relevant agencies will be formed and anyone constructing buildings must have approval from such committees at district and upazila levels, said Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque.

The issue will be finalised and approved by the cabinet soon, he noted following a meeting of the national committee on earthquake preparedness and awareness at the ministry yesterday.

"Rajuk is there in Dhaka to enforce the building code, but there is none to look after the way buildings are constructed in rural areas and district towns," said Razzaque.

It is imperative that everyone constructs buildings follow the building code, he said, adding that buildings constructed following the National Building Code are tolerant to magnitude 7 earthquakes.

"In the last two to three years, tremors were taken lightly. But now there is no scope for it. Experts are saying that a major earthquake could hit parts of India and Bangladesh anytime," he said.

Referring to Dhaka University's geology Prof Maksud Kamal's study stating 76,000 buildings in Dhaka are in high risk to a magnitude 7 earthquake, Razzaque said luckily the

magnitude in Bangladesh was 4 to 5. If it was of 6.9 in Bangladesh, damages and casualties could be enormous, he said.

Under a contingency plan, 6,000 volunteers have already been trained for rescue operations in the case of an earthquake while this number would be raised to 62,000, he noted.

Asked if these volunteers responded to Sunday's earthquake, Disaster Management Division Secretary M Aslam Alam said they called the fire service stations but did not ask them to rush for any operation as there was no major damage.

On retrofitting important buildings like the secretariat or Dhaka Medical College Hospital, the minister said foreign consultants would be appointed soon.

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) or other local engineers do not have the expertise on retrofitting, he noted.

Equipment for rescue operations worth Tk 69 crore were already purchased and distributed to the army, fire service and Dhaka City Corporation, he said.

School students in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet are also being trained on taking safety measures during earthquakes, he added.

Necessary research activities on earthquakes at Department of Geological Survey, Buet and Dhaka University are also underway, he said.

Asked if the preparations are enough, Razzaque answered in the negative, but said the government is trying its best with its limited resources.



PHOTO: FILE PHOTO BY ANURUP KANTI DAS
Jewel Barua's grandmother used to press her hands to his head and cry in vain to ease his pain which at times became unbearable. Her efforts came to an end as the survivor of the Mirsarai tragedy died at Apollo Hospitals in the city yesterday.

JSC, JDC exams from Nov 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations for class VIII students will begin on November 1 this year.

Around 20 lakh students across the country are likely to take the exams under eight general education boards and one madrasa education board this year, said board officials.

The education boards published the routines of the examinations, which was introduced last year in replacement of the junior scholarship exams or class final exams, on Sunday. The examinations will be held till November 21.

The exams will be held on nine subjects, each for 100 marks, with the pass mark set at 33 for each subject. Results will be published on Grade Point Average (GPA) system.

"Necessary preparation is being taken to hold the examinations peacefully," said an official. Registration for taking the exams ended on September 14, he added.

Last year, around 15,05,391 class VIII students from 27,289 educational institutions across the country sat for the examinations. Of them, 10,20,047 students passed with 8,556 getting GPA-5.

BNP body to coordinate agitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition BNP formed a three-member liaison committee led by its acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir to coordinate agitation programmes among the four-party alliance and like minded parties ahead of its anti-government movement.

Two other members of the committee are standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan and Joint Secretary General Mohammad Shahjahan.

"The liaison committee will ensure coordination among the alliance and

like-minded parties aiming to forge a stronger movement," party's Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said yesterday.

He was speaking at a press briefing at the party's central office in the city's Nayapaltan after disclosing the names of the committee members.

Ruhul said the BNP chairperson formed this committee following the decision of a meeting of the four party alliance held on September 12.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia will declare the agitation programme at a rally scheduled to be held on September

27, demanding immediate resignation of the government and a fresh parliamentary election under a non-party caretaker government.

The alliance partners Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Jatiya Party and Islami Oikyo Jote, also demanding restoration of the caretaker government system, will attend the rally.

The caretaker government system was annulled from the constitution by the fifteenth amendment. Khaleda already said her party will not participate in the next election if it is not held under a non-party caretaker government.

SC asks NU not to recruit till Oct 16

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday directed the National University (NU) authorities not to recruit any staff for the university till October 16.

The order was passed following two separate petitions filed against a High Court verdict that declared illegal the appointment of the university's 807 officials and employees.

Among the 807 staff sacked, 279 recently filed the leave to appeal petitions with the SC challenging the HC verdict and seeking stay on the verdict.

Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, also fixed October 16 for holding hearing on the petitions before a full bench of the Appellate Division.

The HC on August 23 ruled that appointment of the 807 staff recruited between November 17, 2003 and August 31, 2004 in the university illegal.

Acting upon the HC verdict, the NU authorities later handed a list of 807 sacked officials and employees on the notice board at its Gazipur office.

Earlier, the NU syndicate called an emergency meeting and decided to sack 821 staff who were recruited through a fake advertisement during the tenure of the BNP-led government.

Barrister Rafique-ul Huq assisted by Barrister Nasiruddin Asim appeared for the sacked officials of NU while Additional Attorney General Murad Reza and Deputy Attorney General Motahar Hossain Saju represented the government.

Another Mirsarai victim dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Another student of Mirsarai tragedy succumbed to his injuries yesterday morning at the Intensive Care Unit of Apollo Hospitals after fighting for life for 69 days.

With the death of Jewel Barua, a class-VIII student of Abu Torab Bahumukhi High School, the death toll of the road accident stands at 43.

On July 11, a truck carrying over 70 students from a football match plunged into a roadside ditch, leaving 39 students dead on the spot.

Following the accident, Jewel along with two other survivors, Raihan and Nayan, were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital. As their condition deteriorated, they were rushed to Apollo Hospitals, Dhaka on September 7. Since then he was receiving treatment there and died yesterday around 9.50am, said Shaikat Barua, a maternal uncle of Jewel.

Earlier, Raihan died on September 8, while Nayan is still undergoing treatment.



PHOTO: PHOTO
An excavator demolishes illegal structures on Beribadh area, East of Shyambazar and adjacent to the river Buriganga, during an eviction drive by Dhaka District Administration, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority and Roads and Highways Department yesterday.

NU exams begin Oct 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The degree (pass) and certificate course examinations of 2010 under the National University (NU) will begin October 20.

Around 4.27 lakh examinees will appear in the examinations at 609 centres across the country.

Happy Birthday To **HRIDOY**
Many happy returns of the day
Baba, Maa Ammuni & Apumoni

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar
Asian Development Bank will organise a seminar; Venue: its conference room; Time: 11:00am.

Discussion
Bangladesh Unmukto Gonotantrik Parishad will organise a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 3:30pm.

Rally
Gonosangskriti Dal will hold a rally; Venue: Central Shaheed Minar premises; Time: 3:00pm.

Discussion
Deshpremik Jonogoner Mancha will organise a discussion; Venue: Gono Sangskriti Kendra; Time: 3:00pm.

Seminar
Mutual Trust Bank will hold a seminar; Venue: Independent University; Time: 11:00am.

Lecture
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh will hold

a lecture; Venue: its auditorium; Time: 4:30pm.

Cycling rally
National Debate Federation Bangladesh will organise a cycling rally; Venue: from Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

Mass signature collection
Families United Against Road Accident will hold a mass signature collection programme; Venue: TSC, Dhaka University; Time: 10:00am.

Interaction
South Asia Partnership Bangladesh will organise an interaction programme; Venue: Brac Centre Inn; Time: 9:30am.

Rally
Coalition of Local NGOs, Bangladesh will hold a rally; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:30pm.

Memorial meeting

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