

2,500 live in high risk DU buildings

PALASH RAHMAN

Around 2,500 people, including students and staff, are staying in the Dhaka University's five risky buildings, which may collapse during earthquake, said sources concerned.

Several structures at the halls have been found "high risky" of earthquake, observes DU Chief Engineer Muhammad Mufizul Islam.

"Around five buildings of Dhaka University have been declared high risky but the students are still living in some of the buildings which can bring much loss of life and property if heavy earthquake takes place," said Mofizul.

The risky buildings on the campus are Haji Muhammad Mushin Hall, Jagannath Hall, Rokeya Hall, DU staff quarter adjacent to Sir PJ Hartog International Hall, said sources.

The authorities directed the students of the risky buildings to vacate those but they do not pay heed to the repeated warnings, alleged the DU chief engineer.

"I have been compelled to stay in a risky building of Jagannath Hall as I have no other way to live outside the hall," said Sajal Das, a resident student of the hall.

All the nights, I pass, seem to be a nightmare due to a sudden earthquake or a normal collapse of the weaker construction," he added.

"There was a structural fault at the main building of Haji Muhammad Mushin Hall and the students have been shifted to a newly made tin-shade structure during its repairing but they used to live in the faulty building," the DU chief engineer told The Daily Star.

Mushin hall provost Prof Ali Akkas said the authority has taken steps to respire the faults of the building spending Tk 1.20 crore.

Experts of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) have supervised the reconstruction works but the work is yet to be completed.

A four-storey building known as "Purba Bari" of Jagannath Hall is high risky and it has been declared unlivable, said sources.

"In spite of establishing a tin-shed structure for the students, many students of this hall often ignore the authority's ban on living there and stays in the building accepting risk of lives," said an official of DU.

Jagannath hall provost Prof Dr Ajay Kumar Das told this correspondent that it's true that the building has been declared risky but it's also difficult to accommodate around 800 students.

An 8-storey building is under construction and it will be ready to inaugurate by January 2012 to resolve the seat crisis, hopes Dr Ajay.

Rokeya hall provost Prof Dr Nazma Shahin said the risky building of her hall has been declared unlivable and the authority is trying to build a 10-storey building to ensure safety of the students.

"I have issued a letter to the Fire Brigade authorities to train female students of my hall so that they can learn



Cracked wall of Haji Muhammad Mushin Hall at Dhaka University. Inset, rods in the roof get exposed as chunks of plaster fell off earlier. The photos were taken yesterday. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

how to save themselves from a disaster like heavy earthquake," said Nazma Shahin.

Chairman of Geology department of DU Prof Dr Mahmud Alam told The Daily Star that the risky buildings of DU should be identified as soon as possible to

label those in some categories so that the people concerned can remain careful of the worst risky structures.

"Proper monitoring should be conducted to detect the faulty and risky buildings to ensure safety of students, teachers and staff of Dhaka University," said Dr

Mahmud. DU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique told The Daily Star that the authorities have already monitored the risky buildings by a group of experts and they will monitor more to ensure safety of the students.

Rajshahi Jubo League man stabbed to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Jubo League activist succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday after being stabbed allegedly by a fellow activist in Rajshahi on Tuesday.

The deceased Pintu, 30, hailed from Khulipara area in Rajshahi.

Police said the incident occurred when the local Awami League (AL) unit was preparing to bring out an anti-terrorism procession from in front of its city office around 5:30pm protesting the recent violence in Dhaka.

Pintu locked in quarrel with a fellow Jubo League activist, Raja, over taking position at the front of the rally. At one stage, Pintu was stabbed, said the city unit AL General Secretary Shafiqur Rahman Badsha.

He was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with several stab injuries and later referred to DMCH where the doctors declared him dead around 6:20pm.

Pintu and Raja had personal enmity, added Badsha.

Pintu's brother Maksud Niru filed a case with Boalia Police Station against 10 persons including Ward Councillor Nizamul Azim in this connection.

21pc students drop out of primary schools

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The dropout rate in primary education stands at 21 percent although the government ensures around 99.47 percent enrolment at primary level, Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Ameen said yesterday.

"We have been able to bring almost 100 percent children to schools but struggling to keep them getting on with schooling," he told a press conference at the ministry's conference room at the secretariat. The dropout rate, however, reduced significantly,

he said. The conference was organised to inform the media of the achievements made by the ministry in the last 32-and-a-half-month.

Replying to a query, the minister said, "Ensuring 100 percent enrolment is the biggest achievement while the biggest challenge is to prevent dropout and build an illiteracy free Bangladesh."

Asked whether the government involves Bangladesh Chhatra League in the literacy programmes, he said, "We never said that Chhatra League would do

those programmes." About nationalisation of registered non-government primary schools, he categorically said the government never said about nationalisation of the schools and is not thinking about it.

Over the past few years, most of the teachers of the country's 24,000 non-government primary schools have been pressing the government for nationalising their institutions.

State Minister Motahar Hossain said the ministry is 80 percent successful in ensuring quality

education and meeting the government's pledge.

He also sought cooperation of the media in detecting the ministry's failures and duties.

About the government's plan to build 1,500 primary schools, Secretary of the ministry AKM Abdul Awal Majumder said they have already finalised 848 schools, and tenders for the schools would be floated soon.

"We would build all the schools and create 7,500 posts for teachers by the end of the government's tenure," he said.



(From left) Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar and BNP leader Abdus Salam Pintoo are being produced before a Dhaka court yesterday.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK Hearing on charge framing Sept 27

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned until September 27 the hearing on charge framing against BNP Senior Vice-chairman Tarique Rahman and 29 others accused in August 21 grenade attack cases.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 passed the order after the lawyers of 11 accused including three former inspectors general of police (IGPs) submitted separate petitions seeking time to prepare for the hearing.

The lawyers pleaded for time saying they had not yet received the necessary documents of the cases.

Ashrafal Huda, Khoda Baksh Chowdhury and Shahudul Haque served as IGPs during the tenure of the BNP-led four-party coalition government.

In another development, advocate

Abdur Rezak Khan lodged a petition at the court seeking permission to be Tarique's defence lawyer.

The lawyer said Zia family requested him to defend Tarique in the cases.

The prosecution argued no lawyer has the right to file a petition on behalf of a fugitive accused.

The court will give decision on the issue once the charges are framed.

Advocate Sanaullah Miah, lawyer of former director general of National Security Intelligence Maj Gen (retd) Rezzakul Haider Chowdhury, filed another petition seeking a ban on airing a news item on Bangladesh Television (BTV) implicating Tarique and several others in the grenade attacks as the trial is still pending.

The lawyer said BTV has been broadcasting the news after Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Huji) chief Mufti Abdul Hannan gave a confessional statement

implicating Tarique.

Thirty-two accused, who are now behind bars, were produced before the tribunal. They include former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar and Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed.

Criminal Investigation Department submitted the supplementary charge sheets on July 3 mentioning 30 names in addition to the 22 accused in the main charge sheets.

Twenty-four people were killed and around 200 others injured in the grisly grenade attack on an AL rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21 in 2004.

The then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina narrowly escaped the attack.

Police filed two cases--one under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and the other for killing people--in this connection.

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