Dhaka sends relief for quake victims

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has sent humanitarian assistance, including six Army medical teams, medicine and other relief materials, to Kathmandu in the wake of the devastation caused by a massive earthquake on Saturday.

Official sources said a 34-member delegation, including a representative of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on board a C-130 aircraft of the Bangladesh Air Force reached Kathmandu with 10 tonnes of relief materials, including tents, dry food, water and blankets. The medical teams will be staying in

Nepal and work with the Nepalese government in assisting the affected people there. In another development, the

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare yesterday announced that it would send a medical team to Nepal in a day or two to provide medical services to the disaster-struck people. Health Minister Mohammad

Nasim has directed the ministry to send a 30-member team comprising orthopaedics, neuroscience specialists and other experts and nurses to Nepal immediately.

dressing materials.

Meanwhile no Bangladeshi the incident.

Affairs Shahriar Alam wrote on his

Facebook account "the Government of Nepal is requesting international assistance in the following areas: Search and Rescue capacity; medical teams, supplies and tenting for hospitals, and dead-body bags; heavy equipment for rubble removal; and helicopters for transport and access to blocked

It said the entire state machinery of Nepal is actively involved in a warfooting rescue operations throughout the earthquake affected areas.

The reported casualties as of yesterday noon are 1,952 deaths. A total of 4,647 persons have been injured.

The health ministry medical team official and journalist in Kathmandu, will also carry different types of medi- Tilak Pokharel, told The Daily Star cine, saline, painkillers, plaster and while describing the situation in Nepal.

Wake-up call

Dhaka," said Mehedi Ahmed Ansary, a civil engineering teacher of Buet and founding director of Bangladesh Earthquake Society.

Mohammad Abu Sadeque, director of Housing and Building Research Institute and an earthquake expert echoed Ansary and said Bangladesh Nepal, North India, Bhutan and Myanmar share the same tectonic plate and all of them are on the common edge of the plate.

"There is a potential danger for Bangladesh in the event of a 7 or 8 magnitude earthquake in Modhupur and Dauki (Meghalaya) faults, which would have an equal intensity of impact on Dhaka causing considerable damage," he said.

"So, Bangladesh is in a dangerous

position," he said. Geologist Prof Akhter Humayun of

Dhaka University told The Daily Star, "There are possibilities that similar aftershocks will take place in a few weeks or in the next few months."

The Dhaka Meteorological office recorded four aftershocks of the Nepal quake and all took place at different places in Nepal rang-

filling of this report yesterday evening. Mohammad Abu Sadeque said the aftershocks were less damaging

ing from 4.7 to 6.7 magnitudes as of

because the total energy of an earthquake is split and released gradually through small shocks rather than all at once, he said, adding, "So, we do not need be panicked with such minor tremors." Rather, it should be a reason for

relief, he said.

Bangladesh was saved this time because the epicentre was about 700km to 750km away in Nepal, said some experts.

"Even if the magnitude of the earthquake was 7.8 on the Richter scale, its intensity in Bangladesh was very low, about 4 to 5 on the intensity scale, Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale," said Mehedi Ahmed Ansary.

"This is why we saw little damage. In Nepal, where the epicentre was, the intensity was 9-10. Damage depends on the intensity scale."

However, Ansary warned that the Nepal earthquake may trigger major tremors in Bangladesh as the plates

were "interconnected". Magnitude of a quake as described popularly on Richter scale shows how

much energy was released at the epicentre. Every point increase in the scale is 32 times more energy released.

On the other hand, intensity is determined from the effects on people, structures, and the natural environment as defined by the United States Geological Survey.

The World Bank and the UNDP had A young man was buried alive under a done two studies on earthquake impacts in Bangladesh in 2010 and

2012 and Ansary was one of the members of the study team. "Bangladesh has five known fault

lines and one of them is in Modhupur, some 70 kilometres off Dhaka," Ansary says. "If we have a 7 Richter scale tremor there, 30 percent of the buildings in Dhaka may suffer moderate to heavy damage."

The reports estimate about 2-3 lakh people would either die or get injured and an economic loss of \$10 billion.

Panic gripped people in Bangladesh

PANIC

national, either visiting or staying in Nepal, have been reported injured in Earlier, State Minister for Foreign

Facebook page, "The same aircraft is expected to be back today (Sunday) with the under-14 girl football team and stranded female and minor Bangladeshis." Meantime, the Embassy of Nepal, Dhaka yesterday wrote in its official

"It's a complete carnage, never seen

or experienced before," a former UN

once again yesterday as an aftershock of 6.7-magnitude hit Godari in Nepal jolting Bangladesh as well around

Residents and employees of many high-rise buildings came out.

noon.

The nerve-centre of the country's administration, the Secretariat, was taken by sheer panic during the tremor yesterday.

Ministers including Shajahan Khan, Rashed Khan Menon, Mujibul Haque Chunnu, Mostafizur Rahman and Anwar Hossain Manju along with high officials and staff rushed out of their offices and stood on the open space. Manju left the secretariat premises

immediately. Around 100 panic-stricken

readymade garment workers were injured while dashing out of different factories in Savar on the outskirt of the capital. Thirteen female garment work-



PHONE CAMERA OVER THE QR CODE TO GET THE VIDEO LINK.

ers of a Narayanganj factory were also

Several hundred workers of Glory Fashions and Madonna Fashions near Sainik Club in Banani refused to enter the factory yesterday saying that the tall building had developed cracks and had tilted.

They demanded an inspection by

At list six female workers at Glory Fashions fell sick after they were allegedly forced to work.

The workers alleged that they gathered in front of the factory in the morning but refused to enter as "the building had tilted in Saturday's earthquake".

"The factory owners in association with local police drove us inside the building which panicked many workers," said a worker, wishing anonym-

The Daily Star correspondent while visiting the factory around noon saw three sick female workers being taken

Alak Saha, managing director of the factory, said the building was fine. "We will, however, hire a Buet expert to get the factory inspected," he said.

Following yesterday's aftershock the factory allowed the workers to leave for the day.

Meanwhile, our correspondents reported that the tremor was also felt elsewhere in the country leaving 60 panicked workers injured in Uttara EPZ in Nilphamari and 50 workers fell sick in Ishwardi EPZ in Pabna.

TWO KILLED

pile of dirt as he was digging a well when the aftershock hit Binadpur area in Rangpur yesterday, reports our correspondent there. Saidul Islam, senior station officer

of Rangpur Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star that they rushed to the spot and pulled out the body of Akhtarul Islam, 30, removing the earth.

Third-grader Md Hasan, 9, of Nayahat Govt Primary School in Thakurgaon, had suffered head injuries during Saturday's quake as he was rushing out of school. He died Saturday evening.



day after an avalanche triggered by an earthquake devastated the camp in Nepal.

electricity.

Third quake hits Nepal

FROM PAGE 1

"Electricity has been cut off, communication systems are congested and hospitals are crowded and are running out of room for storing dead bodies," Oxfam Australia chief executive Helen Szoke told AFP. Climbers reported that the after-

shock caused more avalanches at Mount Everest, just after helicopters airlifted to safety those injured when a wall of snow hit base camp on Saturday, killing at least 18 people. AFP's Nepal bureau chief Ammu

Kannampilly, who was on assignment at base camp, reported that six helicopters had managed to reach the mountain yesterday after the weather improved. Offers of help poured in from

around the world, with dozens of nations or aid groups volunteering everything from sniffer dogs to an inflatable hospital. India dispatched 13 military aircraft to Nepal loaded with tonnes of food, blankets and other aid. The Kathmandu-based National

Emergency Operation Centre put the toll in Nepal at 2,430 while around 6,000 more people had been injured. Officials in India said the toll there

now stood at 67, while Chinese state

media said 18 people had been killed in the Tibet region. Kathmandu airport to close for around were overflowing with bodies. an hour as air traffic controllers evacu-

ated their centre. Several flights had to be diverted in mid-air. The country's cellphone network was working only sporadically, while large parts of the capital were without

reported that tremors were felt throughout the day, including one strong aftershock at dawn before the 6.7-magnitude follow-up quake that struck in the afternoon. The historic nine-storey Dharahara

tower, a major tourist attraction, was among the buildings brought down in Kathmandu Saturday.

thought to have been in the tower at the time of the disaster, based on ticket sales. As rescuers sifted through the huge

mounds of rubble in the capital, some using bare hands, hospitals were overwhelmed with victims who suffered The fresh aftershocks forced multiple fractures and trauma. Morgues At the city's oldest Bir Hospital, an AFP correspondent saw grieving relatives

trying to swat away flies from around a dozen bodies placed on the floor of the morgue after storage space ran out. The first mass cremations were held at the Pashupatinath district of AFP correspondents in Kathmandu

Kathmandu, with the smoke from the

funeral pyres wafting across a swathe of the city. Samir Acharya, a doctor at Nepal's Annapurna Neurological Hospital, said medics were working out of a tent set up in a parking lot to cope with the

Meanwhile, aid groups and govern-Police said around 150 people were ments worldwide intensified efforts to

scared to stay in the building.

South Korea promised \$1 million in humanitarian aid. fly out yesterday, carrying specialist

> generators, while a second aircraft would take more doctors and nurses. Pakistan said two C-130 aircraft carrying equipment for a 30-bed hos-

help earthquake-hit Nepal, but

blocked roads, downed power lines

and overcrowded hospitals posed

formidable challenges in an already

devastation, Britain released £5 mil-

lion (\$7.6 million, 7.0 million euros)

for the British Red Cross and "aid

workers on the ground so they can

provide desperately needed supplies",

international development secretary

also en route and an initial \$1 million

in aid to address immediate needs had

been authorised, the US Agency for

pledged more than \$4.5 million, and

Australia and New Zealand together

Russia said two of its planes would

rescuers, doctors and psychologists as

well as equipment including helicop-

Sri Lanka sent a military C-130 aircraft

carrying a 48-member medical and relief

team along with supplies and power

International Development said.

A US disaster response team was

As Nepal began to take stock of the

poor country.

Justine Greening said.

ters and drones.

pital, food and search and rescue teams had arrived in Nepal. A 62-member Chinese search and rescue team with sniffer dogs was on

the ground in Kathmandu and a medical team would be mobilised, state news agency Xinhua reported. A Singaporean search and rescue team was also heading for Nepal, while

Japan's 70-strong emergency services team departed yesterday. A 45-strong team of rescue experts, doctors and other experts, from Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg, was leaving on a Belgian military plane. Nepal and the rest of the Himalayas

are particularly prone to earthquakes because of the collision of the Indian and Eurasia plates. An 6.8 magnitude quake hit eastern

injured, while some patients were too Nepal in August 1988 killing 721 people, and a magnitude 8.1 quake killed 10,700 people in Nepal and India in

PM terms

The prime minister was briefing reporters at the Gono Bhaban on the outcome of her visit to Indonesia where she attended Asian-African Conference Commemoration Indonesia 2015.

oppressor, the PM said, "Will people respond to her call after the way she devastated public life? People didn't like the killings and atrocities committed in the name of movement." Criticising Khaleda for seeking

Dhaka north, Hasina wondered how the BNP chairperson could seek votes after "torching so many buses". Responding to a query, the PM

blockade and hartals. "Anyone having conscience would never cast votes for the BNP or the

Jamaat or the 20-party alliance." On the attacks on Khaleda's motorcade during election campaigns, Hasina said the BNP chief

The premier also blasted the BNP chief for advising people to take money from AL-backed candidates if they offer any, and said Khaleda understands well "how to take

"She took away money when she was in power ... She has a habit of taking money and betray people."

Hasina also came down heavily on Transparency International Bangladesh for its report that said most of PM's relief fund meant for Rana Plaza victims was yet to be disbursed.

government. "I have details of who have been given what amount of money."

AL-led combine's letter to EC

tomorrow's polls. An alliance delegation led by

Ahmad. The combine requested the EC to

remain alert to make sure that Khaleda cannot "create anarchy" and the polls are held in a free and fair manner.

Daily Star reporter access to the press



Terming Khaleda a killer and an

votes for bus, the election symbol of BNP-backed mayoral candidate in

said Khaleda would be tried as "mastermind of the subversive activities" that left around a hundred people dead during the BNP-led coalition's

suffered the wrath of people.

money".

The PM ruled out the possibility of vote rigging in city polls as hinted by the BNP chief. "Khaleda knows better how to go to power by rigging votes."

She said all families of Rana Plaza victims have been rehabilitated by the

The AL-led 14-party alliance urged the Election Commission to take steps to prevent Khaleda from "carrying out subversive activities" centring

Samyabadi Dal General Secretary Dilip Barua went to the EC Secretariat around 10:30am, and handed over a letter to Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin

(The Gono Bhaban yesterday denied The

briefing without giving any reasons. The newspaper, however, carries the report based on information from secondary sources.)



The Election Commission sorting out polling materials and equipment at the gym of

MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. The port city goes to polls tomorrow.

ANURUP KANTI DAS

Polling agents hard to assign

FROM PAGE 1 A polling station consists of several polling booths. There are 5,892 booths in 1,093 polling centres of DSCC, while DNCC has 889 polling centres with 4,746 booths. In CCC, the number of booths is 4,906.

ASM Akram, a mayoral aspirant of DSCC, said he would not be able to assign polling agents to each polling station, let alone each polling booth.

"It is not possible for me to assign agents to all the centres. I hope I will have agents at around half of the polling stations," said Akram, also chairman of Bangladesh Muktijoddha Krishak-Sramik Oikya Jote.

Abdullah Al Kafee, a CPB leader and candidate from DNCC, said his agents would be present at most of the polling centres unless local goons and thugs intimidate them. "Our party activists as well as the

general public are willing to be my polling agents. The Election Management Committee of our party will soon decide on this," said Kafee, who got support from Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD). Interestingly, the candidates backed

by the AL and the BNP are arranging leader and DSCC mayor aspirant. for polling agents from among their supporters for "weaker candidates" in the centres they consider "vulnerable", said party insiders. Believing that it will enable them to have more influence inside the polling

booths, they are working on this for the last three days, added the insiders. Sources said the BNP-backed aspirants are looking to grasp this opportu-

not to be named, said, "A BNP-backed

candidate has said his men would

work as my agents if I want. But ulti-

ites.

nity more than the ruling party favour-A DNCC mayoral hopeful, wishing

mately they will work for the BNP's candidate."

Besides, the BNP kept some of its

leaders in the electoral race just to get the support of the polling agents. Take the case of Asaduzzaman Ripon, a mayoral candidate of DSCC,

for an example.

Ripon, international affairs secretary of BNP, did not get the party support, but still he is contesting the election. "It is because his agents will now be working for Mirza Abbas," said a party

leader who is dealing with the agent recruitments. BNP leader Mirza Abbas is contesting the election from DSCC. Similarly, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dalbacked candidate from DSCC Shahidul Islam is supporting AL's

mayoral favourite Sayeed Khokon. "Now Shahidul Islam's polling agents will work for Sayeed," said an AL leader involved in electioneering.

Some mayoral aspirants are now

focusing on assigning one agent to a

polling station. "We will try to have an agent at each of the 889 polling centres, but placing one agent at every booth is really difficult," said Bazlur Rashid Firoj, a BSD

Firoz, backed by the CPB and the BSD, said the ward councillor contestants from his party are likely to be able to place an agent at every booth.

Another DNCC mayoral aspirant Zonayed Saki, in a similar note, said his agents would be present at most of the polling centres but there are certain areas where his supporters are being threatened by followers of other candidates.

"If security is ensured, our agents would be present at most polling centres," he concluded.

Abdul Khalek, DSCC mayoral candidate backed by the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Rob), said he

would be able to recruit polling agents for around 200 polling stations. Another mayoral aspirant Moshiur Rahman said he will have agents at all

polling stations, but not at every polling booth. In Chittagong, Alauddin Chowdhury, an independent candidate, said he would assign agents only in the polling centres where he thinks he would get a good number of votes,

Ukraine soldier killed, 7 injured in east: army

reports our Chittagong correspondent.

A Ukrainian soldier was killed and seven others injured as bombardments intensified in the east of the country where government forces are fighting pro-

Russian rebels, the army said yesterday. It was the latest reported fatality in a year-long conflict which has killed more than 6,000 people.

Despite a ceasefire deal, European

OSCE monitors say shelling is rumbling on daily at the front between the two sides. Ukrainian military spokesman Oleksandr Motuzyanyk accused the

pro-Russian side of intensifying its fire against Ukrainian army positions. He told a news conference at noon on Sunday that one Ukrainian soldier was killed and seven injured over the

past 24 hours. "The number of violations of the ceasefire by the rebels has increased in the past 24 hours," he said, accusing them of using Grad multiple rocket launchers and other heavy artillery banned under the February ceasefire