

Nepal quake raises alarm

Experts warn against shoddy construction, rapid urbanisation in South Asian countries

AFP, New Delhi

DEATH TOLL 7,500

Nepal's earthquake should act as a wake-up call to neighbouring countries which have failed to learn lessons from their own disasters and where shoddy construction and rapid urbanisation could lead to death on an even greater scale next time round, experts say.

Given its location on a seismic faultline, another major earthquake had long been feared in the Himalayan nation following a disaster in 1934 that flattened much of the capital Kathmandu.

Experts and engineers had been racing against time to try to better prepare the landlocked country, which like many of its neighbours is plagued by poverty, urban overcrowding and corruption, for the big one.

But the conditions that have long raised alarm bells for Nepal are mirrored across the South Asian region, regularly hit by quakes that have left tens of thousands dead and homeless in the last two decades.

"The quake could have happened anywhere in this region," said Hari Kumar, regional coordinator for South Asia at GeoHazards International.

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LANGUAGE MATTERS! When warning signs in Bangla flatly failed to prevent public urination, the government has recently opted to erect new signs in Arabic, considered a sacred language among Muslims, with the same message. This time, it's working. The photo shows one such Arabic sign on the sidewall of Panthakunja Park in the capital's Karwan Bazar.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Innovative way indeed!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In an innovative effort to stop people from urinating in public, the religious affairs ministry has placed a notice in Arabic in some areas of the city.

The red graffiti in Arabic reads: "Urinating here is prohibited". The prohibitory sign accompanies a Bangla instruction: "A mosque is opposite to the street. For creating public awareness: Religious Affairs Ministry."

"I've seen the notice this morning [yesterday]. Perhaps it was painted last night [Tuesday night]," said Deepak Chandra Ghosh, a rickshaw mechanic who has been running a makeshift shop on the footpath in Bijoy Nagar for over 10 years.

Talking to The Daily Star, Religious Affairs Minister Matior Rahaman said he launched the public awareness campaign on his own decision.

"People are respectful of their religion. When they see Arabic letters, they become

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UK polls today

13 Bangladeshi-Britons in race

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Apart from political ramifications, today's parliamentary polls in the UK bear a different significance for the Bangladeshis.

For the first time in the history of Britain, 13 Bangladesh-origin candidates are vying for seats in the House of Commons through this election, already forecast to be the tightest race in memory.

Most of these candidates have been nominated by Ed Miliband's main opposition Labour Party.

Tulip Siddiq, the granddaughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and niece of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, is contesting for the Hampstead and Kilburn constituency, with the party's ticket.

Rushanara Ali, the first British lawmaker with roots in Bangladesh, is vying for the Bethnal Green and Bow constituency. She was elected MP in

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Tulip Siddiq



Rushanara Ali

Govt creates new fund for workers

Exporters contribute to it from their income

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a separate welfare fund for export-oriented workers to face any emergency situation and provide them with insurance coverage.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed made the announcement after a meeting with owners of different industrial sectors at the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment in Dhaka.

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Traffickers cheat 26 jobseekers

Promised job in Canada, sent them to Nepal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion yesterday arrested two "key persons" of a transnational human trafficking syndicate from Khulna.

Promising jobs in Canada, the syndicate had held 26 Bangladeshi fortune seekers captive at a house in a remote village in Nepal and tortured them inhumanly for ransom, the Rab said.



Mujibur



Faisal

The arrestees are Mujibur Rahman, 50, and Faisal-ur-Rashid, 30. Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-2 detained the duo from Khulna's Purba Bania Khamar area around 12:30am.

The arrests came at a time when horrific tales of trafficked victims at the deep jungle camps in Thailand were being unfolded. Bodies believed to be of

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Three mayors take oath

UNB, Dhaka

The newly elected mayors of three city corporations in Dhaka and Chittagong yesterday reaffirmed their

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PRAYER TIMING

MAY 7

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-15 12-45 5-00 6-34 8-00
JAMAAT 4-50 1-15 5-15 6-38 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Pakistan's two centurions, Azhar Ali (L) and Younis Khan, leave the field during the tea break on the first day of the second Test against Bangladesh in Mirpur on Wednesday. Younis was later dismissed for 148 while Azhar remained unbeaten on 127 as the tourists ended the day on 323 for three. Story on Page 14. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

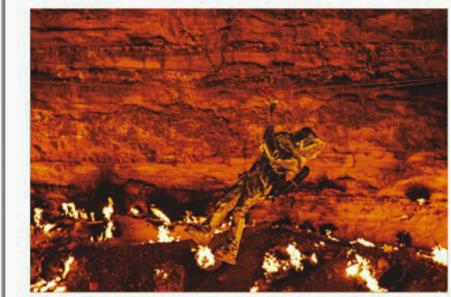
Descending into 'Door to Hell'

MAIL ONLINE

A world-renowned explorer has become the first person to descend into The Door to Hell -- a flame pit in Turkmenistan that has burned for more than 40 years.

Spectacular images have been released of George

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- Designs should be original and suitable for the weather conditions.
- The attires and accessories sent for the album will be returned.
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