

1,100-year-old

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Some terracotta plaques were found from a trench and the solid objects on the walls surrounding the temple were overly burnt, said members of the team.

Sohag Ali, a team member, said they had detected idols and staircase of the temple built during the Pala period (Eighth to 11th centuries) and were working to dig those out.

Prof Swadhin said they also found a Buddhist temple, built around the same time, at Itakura Mound of Basudevpur village recently. The central edifice of temple was built on a platform of 45 metres.

The JU teacher alleged that some criminals tried to damage some part of the newly-discovered temple in Maherpur on the night of 5th May but failed.

"We are going to write a letter to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs seeking protection for the archaeological sites," he said.

Chairman Badal said he would also take initiatives to ensure that the temples are not harmed.

Lessons

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The collapse of the Rana Plaza building with more than 3,000 garment workers inside in 2013 was a wake-up call for governments, trade unions and the whole industry to address systemic human rights issues in the garment sector.

"This week's factory fire in Manila must strengthen our resolve to call for action to prevent such accidents from taking place," Addo noted.

The Bangladesh Accord is a legally binding agreement which has been signed by over 150 corporations from 20 countries, global and local trade unions, NGOs and workers' rights groups.

Due to support from the International Labour Organisation, the Rana Plaza disaster also led to progress on labour law reform, labour inspection, workplace safety and compensation for the affected workers or their families.

Government efforts have been undertaken in line with the Accord and in collaboration with the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, led by 26 mainly North American companies.

"The Working Group commends such collaborative actions to find practical solutions to health and safety risks. Yet, it recalls that there are many cases of human rights abuses by business enterprises in which victims are unable to access justice and where impunity prevails," the expert said.

"Accidents are still happening, financing of action plans aimed at improving fire and building safety remains contentious, trade unions continue to face obstacles in registering and operating in many countries, and victims of Rana Plaza and other workplace accidents face long delays in receiving compensation," Addo underlined.

The ultimate

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never fall over.

Lit Motors, creator of the C-1 self-balancing car, recently showed off their futuristic vehicle at the 2015 Innovation Awards, hosted by Popular Science.

"Our vehicle is the future of transportation," Lit Motors founder Danny Kim said in a statement. "It combines the romance and efficiency of a motorcycle with the safety and convenience of a car, creating the ultimate urban vehicle."

The C-1 has a top speed of 160kph and can go from 0 to 96kph in a blistering six seconds, according to Lit Motors.

But the most impressive trick the C-1 can boast of is its ability to balance itself on just two wheels.

"The 'secret sauce' of the C-1 is our patented gyroscopic stability system," said Kim. "Using a pair of flywheels spinning at 10,000+ rpm, our gyro system exerts 1300 ft-lbs of torque to control the tilt and lean of the vehicle."

"This allows the C-1 to lean itself into and out of turns, and is powerful enough to keep the C-1 upright, even in a collision," he added.

This effect is achieved by using spinning gyros embedded in the vehicle beneath the seat. A spinning disk -- also known as a gyro -- can keep its balance where a stationary disk would fall flat, just like a bicycle wheel.

What's more, the C-1 is also environmentally friendly, powered by electricity instead of petrol.

While it looks small, the C-1 has enough space for a passenger in the backseat. It also allows the driver to squeeze into parking spaces normally reserved for motorcycles.

Kim hopes the product will hit the market within two years and cost from \$24,000.

Boston bomber gets death sentence

BBC ONLINE

A US jury yesterday sentenced Boston bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev to death by lethal injection.

After 14 hours of deliberation, the jury of five men and seven women came to its decision.

Three people were killed and 260 were injured when Tsarnaev, now 21, and his brother placed bombs at the finishing line of the Boston Marathon in 2013.

Victims and their family members sobbed as the sentence was read. Tsarnaev bowed his head but showed no emotion.

Jurors made findings on 12 factors that would support the death penalty and 21 mitigating factors his defence said supported a life in



Dzhokhar Tsarnaev

prison verdict. The jury's decision had to be unanimous. Tsarnaev to receive a death sentence.

Seven of 30 charges Tsarnaev was convicted of allow the possibility of the death penalty.

Years of appeals are likely for Tsarnaev, whose legal team argued repeatedly to have the case moved from Boston, Massachusetts. The defence said it would be impossible for Tsarnaev to receive a fair trial in Boston. Tsarnaev's lawyers had admitted he played a role in the attacks but said that his older brother, Tamerlan - shot dead by police in the subsequent manhunt - was the driving force.

China should

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diplomatic visitors to Beijing, who normally stick to uninterrupted pledges of friendship and good relations.

The world's two most populous nations are jockeying for regional influence in Asia and their relationship is coloured by a brief but bloody 1962 border war over the northeastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, parts of which Beijing claims as South Tibet.

Another bone of contention is what Beijing sees as Delhi's support of the Dalai Lama -- a Nobel Peace Prize laureate whom China considers a separatist -- and the Tibetan government in exile, both based in India.

"Our relationship has been complex in recent decades," Modi said, adding there were issues that "trouble smooth development of our relations".

"But, we have a historic responsibility to turn this relationship into a source of strength for each other and a force of good for the world," he said, adding that the Chinese leadership had been "responsive" in the meetings. "We are committed to set a new direction between the two largest Asian countries," he said.

Modi began his three-day visit on Thursday in Xian, the capital of Chinese President Xi Jinping's home province Shaanxi, where he was hosted by the head of state. This was the first time Xi had welcomed a foreign leader to his hometown, Chinese media reported.

In another moment of warmth, a selfie of Modi and Li smiling in the sunshine at what appeared to be Beijing's Temple of Heaven was posted on both the Indian leader's Sina Weibo Chinese social media account and Twitter -- access to which is blocked in China.

"It's selfie time!" Modi captioned the picture on Twitter. "Thanks Premier Li."

After their formal meeting, Li said in a speech: "We do not deny that there are some disagreements between us, but we have far more common interests than differences."

"We agree that we need to keep up the momentum on the special representatives' talks on the boundary question and seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution."

The two countries signed 24 documents, including agreements to cooperate in fields ranging from aerospace and railways to tourism and education, although no details were given, as well as open consulates in Chennai and Chengdu.

But China has become increasingly assertive in territorial disputes in recent years and relations remain delicate, as demonstrated by the mixed rhetoric.

"The bilateral relationship is still vulnerable to many sensitive issues," said an editorial in the Global Times, affiliated with the Communist Party mouthpiece People's Daily. "Lack of mutual trust still disturbs both sides."

China is India's biggest trading partner with two-way commerce totalling \$71 billion in 2014. But India's trade deficit with China has soared from just \$1 billion in 2001-02 to more than \$38 billion last year, Indian figures show.

After his meeting with Li, Modi told students at Beijing's elite Tsinghua University that India's democracy and youthful population were key assets for his country.

"India has 1.2 billion people, and 800 million below 35 years old," he said. "This is a very good advantage, and democracy is also a key advantage to us."

Save migrants drifting

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The Secretary-General "also urges governments to facilitate timely disembarkation and keep their borders and ports open in order to help the vulnerable people who are in need," the statement reads.

THE US

The United States urged the governments in the region to work together to save lives on the sea and accommodate the people who are on the seas in their vicinity.

"This is an urgent regional challenge that needs to be addressed regionally through a coordinated international effort and in accordance with international conventions and with maritime law," said Jeff Rathke, director, Press Office of the US Department of State on Thursday in Washington DC.

"The priority is to save lives. And we appreciate that the governments of the region have accommodated many Rohingya and other refugees and we urge them to continue to do so," said the US official during a regular press briefing.

UNOHCRR

In a separate statement, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein expressed alarm at reports that some countries are threatening to criminalise vulnerable migrants and asylum seekers who have crossed borders irregularly.

"Governments in Southeast Asia need to respond to this crisis from the premise that migrants, regardless of their legal status, how they arrive at borders, or where they come from, are people with rights that must be upheld. Criminalising such vulnerable people, including children, and placing them in detention is not the solution," he said.

"I am appalled at reports that Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia have been pushing boats full of vulnerable migrants back out to sea, which will inevitably lead to many avoidable deaths. The focus should be on saving lives, not further endangering them," Zeid said.

He, however, praised Indonesia for disembarking 582 migrants on May 10 and Malaysia for disembarking 1,018 others the following day.

UNHCR

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has also expressed alarm at reports suggesting that Indonesia and Malaysia may have pushed back boats carrying vulnerable people from Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The UNHCR says it has asked countries in Southeast Asia to approach this issue as a regional one with real human consequences and has offered to support states to interview the different groups and help target solutions to their specific needs.

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein in his statement issued in Geneva said the number of people leaving Myanmar and Bangladesh by boat is estimated to have climbed to around 53,000. Some 920 migrants are known to have perished in the Bay of Bengal between September 2014 and March this year.

"They have been predominantly Rohingya fleeing persecution from Rakhine State in Myanmar, with increasing numbers of impoverished Bangladeshi migrants taking to the seas over the last year," Zeid added.

"Until the Myanmar government addresses the institutional discrimination against the Rohingya population, including equal access to citizenship, this precarious migration will continue," he said.

Saudi warns rebels over Yemen truce breaches

AFP, Sanaa

The Saudi-led coalition against Huthi rebels in Yemen Thursday warned a five-day truce "would not last long" in the face of alleged breaches, as the UN called for calm to allow badly needed aid to reach the country.

The coalition accused Iran-backed rebels of violating the ceasefire for the second day in a row by carrying out military operations, including shelling Saudi troops in the border zone and targeting citizens' homes, according to a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency.

The coalition "warns the Huthi militias and their supporters that self-restraint and being committed to the truce would not last long in (the) case the militias continue such practices," it said.

The humanitarian pause that began late Tuesday is the first break in the air war the coalition began on March 26 in support of exiled President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi.

The Saudi-led campaign was launched to reinstate the rule of Hadi after the Huthis, backed by army units loyal to ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh, overran much of Yemen.

The bombings have taken a heavy toll, with the United Nations estimating that more than 1,500 people have been killed in air strikes and fighting between rebel forces and Hadi loyalists since March.

UN envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Sheikh Ahmed said he was "very worried about violations of the truce", urging all sides to "strictly respect a cessation of military operations... to allow the flow of aid" and to spare airports, ports and any other infrastructure necessary to allow help to reach the embattled population.

Residents said calm prevailed across most of the country except in the cities of Taez, Daleh and oil-rich Marib, where they reported intermittent exchanges of fire between rebel and pro-Hadi forces.

The Huthis and their allies have pledged to abide by the ceasefire while Saudi Arabia has warned it will punish any attempt to exploit the truce.

"We have said that we will have a five-day humanitarian ceasefire, subject of course to the Huthis abiding by that ceasefire. Unfortunately they have not," Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al Jubeir told a news conference in Camp David, where the US president is holding a summit of Gulf allies.

"We are hoping that the Huthis will abide by the terms of the ceasefire and stop their aggressive behaviour if they want the ceasefire to hold."

Police probe

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Besides, Ananta's name was on the list of bloggers which Farabi posted on social media.

Farabi was arrested after the February 26 killing of Avijit Roy as he had issued repeated death threats to the blogger.

On Tuesday morning, Ananta was hacked to death by a group of masked men in Subid Bazar area of Sylhet. Police could not identify any of the killers.

"It's not just any other killing," Additional Commissioner (Media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police Rahmat Ullah said yesterday. "It has links with the previous murders of writers and bloggers."

The investigators have started tracking the cellphone numbers used in the area at the time of the killing. Ananta's phone was active during the attack, reports a correspondent from Sylhet.

Meanwhile, socio-cultural and progressive political organisations from a gathering in Sylhet demanded a monument to Ananta where he was hacked to death.

It's time to wake up

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geology department at Dhaka University and a noted seismologist.

"So, what we urgently need are public awareness and the government's preparedness," he said.

When two tectonic plates get locked with each other, energy accumulates inside the earth for over hundreds of years. The energy is released through the borderline or fault line of the tectonic plates resulting in earthquake, added the DU teacher.

Bangladesh lies close to three tectonic plates, including the Indian plate to the west and south west, Tibet sub-plate to the north and Burmese sub-plate to the east. The plates have converging or transverse movements, said Prof Akhter.

"More importantly, borderline of the Indian plate and Burmese sub-plate runs across Bangladesh territory and the strain energy is building up along the plate boundary that will result in an earthquake," he noted.

That aside, there are active fault lines of the plates like Modhupur and a fault line stretching from Mymensingh to Faridpur across Dhaka and Dauki fault line along the foot of Shilong plateau in Bangladesh-Meghalaya border.

There are also the main boundary thrust of Indian plate and Eurasia plate at the foot of the Himalaya to the north of Bangladesh, Chittagong-Arakan plate boundary to the east, Sylhet-Assam plate boundary fault to the north-east of Dhaka, Kaladan fault of Burma plate in Mizoram and Burma.

"These are all considered potential sources of major and great earthquakes with the magnitude above 7 on the Richter scale," mentioned Prof Akhter.

Over the last four centuries, a 7 magnitude Modhupur earthquake in 1885 and the 1897 great Indian earthquake with 8.7 magnitude in Assam rocked and damaged Bangladesh. The Dauki great earthquake in 1787 changed the course of the Brahmaputra, he said.

The Sylhet-Assam fault triggered a 7.6 magnitude earthquake in 1918 while Srimangal experienced a 7.5 magnitude earthquake in 1868, he said, adding that the 8.5 magnitude earthquake along the Chittagong-Arakan plate boundary in 1762 raised the Saint Martin's Island by two and a half metres, making it habitable.

Energy has been building up at all the above said borderlines and faults and it would be released causing an earthquake, said the expert.

According to him, the 7.8 magnitude Pokhara earthquake in Nepal on April 25 is a recurrence after 80 years. It has so far claimed over 7,800 lives and ruined hundreds of structures.

VULNERABILITY

ASM Maksud Kamal, chairman of the department of disaster science and management at Dhaka University, said over 1.40 lakh one to four-storey masonry buildings (built without iron rods) out of around four lakh buildings in 300 sqkm area of Dhaka city might collapse in the event of an 7.5 magnitude earthquake within the Bangladesh territory.

Besides, at least 80,000 buildings with a soft storey (which is less stiff) or the ground floor vacant for car parking are equally vulnerable, he added, citing the findings of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP).

The over-hanging buildings with heavier top floors than the bottom would collapse first, said Maksud, who led the CDMP earthquake technical team.

"The structures built on the earth-filled low-lying marshland stand extremely vulnerable to earthquakes, as the ground shaking wave duration is longer in marshland than what it is in strong red soil," he noted.

Of the 300 square-kilometre area of the core Dhaka city, 65 percent is of soft soil.

Any 7.5 magnitude earthquake along the 60km-long Modhupur fault line or 240km-long Dauki fault line, both within Bangladesh territory, would result in such a havoc.

Mehedi Ahmed Ansary, professor of civil engineering at Buet and the founding general secretary of Bangladesh Earthquake Society, echoed the views of Prof Akhter.

Citing examples of building collapses like Rana Plaza, Phoenix and Spectrum without an earthquake, Mehedi warned about the dangers of constructing buildings without regulatory oversight and flouting the National Building Code. Those three disasters exposed the country's inability to tackle a single building collapse.

He said the Assam earthquake in 1897, with the epicentre 250km off Dhaka, had killed 1,542 people in Dhaka, which had a population of just 90,000 back then, and razed half the masonry structures across the 20 sqkm city.

The human catastrophe in the event of a major earthquake is foreseeable with the population now 100 times bigger and the city area expanded manifold due to an unplanned growth.

The Bashundhara Housing Project, Pallabi and Goran schemes of Eastern Housing, Niketan housing, Baridhara DOHS, Aftabnagar housing, Jolshiri housing for the army and settlements on the Buriganga flood plains were all made by filling low-lying marshland and flood flow zones. This was done without any scientific oversight, making the structures there potentially vulnerable to earthquakes, he said.

Such filling is going on a massive scale in the 1,528 sqkm area of Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha.

Brig Gen Ali Ahmed Khan, director general of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said gas explosion, fire from electricity and water contamination following an earthquake would take the situation out of their control.

"The roads may be inaccessible with rubble of collapsed buildings. The chemical warehouses and factories in residential areas might cause infernos.... The first aid medical teams may not be able to reach the victims," he mentioned.

There is no designated water reservoir in Dhaka city to fight any major fire, Khan pointed out.

PREPAREDNESS

The fire service DG said there are 30,000 trained volunteers, 200 trained officials and 57 sets of rescue and search equipment, like cutting tools and drilling hammers. The army has some heavy equipment like concrete breakers and excavators.

"But such preparedness is extremely inadequate to manage the devastation of a major earthquake," he added.

Prof Maksud Kamal said of the 2,300km roads in 127 sqkm city corporations area, only 300km are accessible by fire service rescue vehicles and heavy equipment. Though a contingency plan involving 13 government organisations is in place for post-earthquake disaster management, it lacks coordination and preparedness, he noted.

Also, there is no trained manpower to operate all the available equipment.

The experts stressed the need for launching a massive campaign to make people aware of simple life saving tips during an earthquake.

Arrest, punish

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"We've been observing with utmost resentment that religious fanatics have been killing followers of freethinkers [Avijit, Oyasiquir and Ananta] one after another in broad daylight on busy streets, under the nose of police and public in the same cruel manner with machetes in 2015," the statement reads.

"We do not find it right to hurt the religious sentiment of anyone. If any freethinker's writing hurts someone's religious sentiment, then the [aggrieved] person can protest and take shelter of law. He or she can also write criticism," it said.

Forty eminent citizens in a joint statement urged the people of the country to come forward and resist the evil activities.

On behalf of Bangladesh Rukhe Darao, the signatories are Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman, advocate Sultana Kamal, Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Sarwar Ali, Abed Khan, Syed Shamsul Haq, MM Akash, and Ramendu Majumdar, while the joint statement was given by Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique and Prof Ajoy Roy, among others.

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