



A shopper's guide to Dhaka

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Eid in a time of uncertainty and change

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BIMSTEC must adapt to global shifts and future challenges

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Dengue surge feared as millions leave Dhaka

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China pledges \$2.1b in loans, investment

Yunus, Xi Jinping hold bilateral meeting; Dhaka welcomes Beijing's interest in Teesta water management project

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Chinese government and businesses committed \$2.1 billion in loans, investments, and grants to Bangladesh during Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus's visit to China.

Prof Yunus and Chinese President Xi Jinping met at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday morning.

After the bilateral meeting, a joint statement was issued, highlighting the cooperation between the two countries.

President Xi promised to encourage Chinese firms to relocate their manufacturing plants to Bangladesh as they look to diversify their production destination, said Ashik Chowdhury, executive chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority and Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority.

Nearly 30 Chinese companies have pledged to invest \$1 billion for the establishment of a Chinese Industrial Economic Zone in Chattogram as Prof Yunus urged them to invest in manufacturing in Bangladesh, CA's Press Wing said in a statement.

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CHINESE GOVT TO LEND

\$400m for Mongla Port modernisation

\$350m for China Industrial Economic Zone

\$150m as technical assistance

30 Chinese companies pledge to invest \$1b

One agreement, 8 MoUs signed



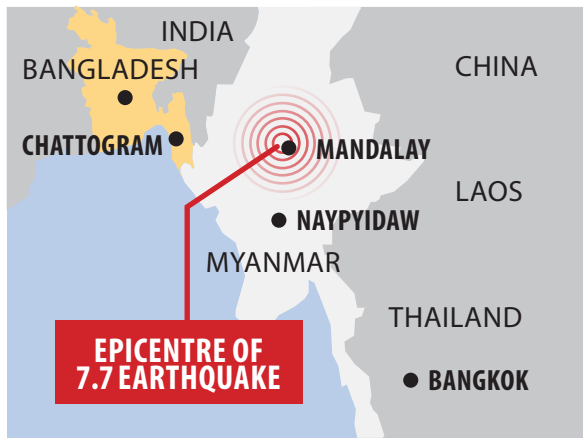
Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus meets Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday -- the third day of his four-day visit to China.

PHOTO: P10



Rescue workers walk past the debris of an under-construction building that crumbled in Bangkok yesterday. Bottom left, a collapsed building in Mandalay, Myanmar. A powerful earthquake, originating in central Myanmar, rocked the region, buckling roads, and destroying buildings.

PHOTO: AFP



Myanmar quake kills over 150

Many trapped as buildings collapse in the region; quake jolts 6 countries including Thailand, Bangladesh, India, China

AGENCIES

A huge earthquake hit Myanmar and Thailand yesterday, killing more than 150 people and injuring hundreds, with dozens trapped in collapsed buildings.

The death toll is expected to rise.

The shallow 7.7-magnitude tremor hit northwest of the city of Sagaing in central Myanmar in the early afternoon, and was followed minutes later by a 6.4-magnitude aftershock.

The quake flattened buildings, downed bridges, and cracked roads across swathes of Myanmar. It even demolished a 30-storey skyscraper under construction hundreds of kilometres (miles) away in Bangkok.

While the full extent of the catastrophe is yet to emerge, the leader of isolated Myanmar, in the grip of a civil war, issued a rare plea for international aid.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing said 144 people had been killed, with 732 confirmed injured, but warned the toll was "likely to rise".

Eight deaths have been confirmed so far in Thailand, with more expected.

"I would like to invite any country, any organisation, or anyone in Myanmar to come and help. Thank you," he said in a televised speech after visiting a hospital in the capital Naypyidaw.

He urged massive relief efforts in the wake of the disaster and said he had "opened all ways for foreign aid".

US President Donald Trump said Washington would be offering assistance.

Four years of civil war sparked by the military seizing power have ravaged Myanmar's infrastructure and healthcare system, leaving it ill-equipped to respond to such a disaster.

Power is down in parts of Myanmar's biggest city Yangon, the local utility said.

The country declared a state of emergency across the six worst-affected regions after the quake.

A wake-up call for Dhaka

PINAKI ROY

The series of six earthquakes that shook Myanmar yesterday, occurring along the Sagaing fault -- the country's longest faultline -- served as a stark reminder of Dhaka's earthquake vulnerability.

Experts warn that without urgent preparatory measures, Dhaka, sitting atop an active seismic zone, faces catastrophic risks if a major quake strikes.

Experts say Bangladesh is one of the most tectonically active regions in the world. It sits where three tectonic plates -- the Indian Plate, the Eurasian Plate, and the Burmese Plate -- meet. The Indian Plate is moving northeast, slowly colliding with the Eurasian Plate.

The Sagaing fault is part of the Indo-Burma subduction zone, and Bangladesh also sits in it.

Yesterday's earthquakes, ranging from magnitude 4.5 to 7.7, damaged buildings across Myanmar and Thailand and reportedly killed nearly 150 people.

"It happened in the Indo-Burma subduction zone, where energy has been accumulating for more than 100 years, and

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Eid travel mostly smooth so far

STAR REPORT

Thousands of Eid holidaymakers hit the road yesterday, leading to a surge in traffic on highways. However, there were no reports of major gridlocks, mainly due to the extended nine-day holiday.

Meanwhile, another rush is expected today as garment factories and other businesses will be closed for Eid celebrations.

Traffic on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway slowed to a crawl along a 10km stretch from Tongi to Chandana intersection yesterday morning. However, conditions improved as the day progressed, reports our Gazipur correspondent.

Rafiqul Islam, a passenger stuck in the congestion, told The Daily Star around 10:00am, "I left Mohakhali for Tongi, but I have been stranded here for two hours. The bus moves a little, then stops again. I haven't even reached the intersection yet."

Ashok Kumar Pal, additional deputy commissioner (traffic) of Gazipur Metropolitan Police, attributed the slowdown to the early exodus of garment workers and the reckless movement of battery-run rickshaws. "We lack

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Hundreds of people travelling to their village homes crowd onto launches, filling every inch of available space, including the roof, as the nine-day Eid vacation began yesterday. The photo was taken from Postogola Bridge in Dhaka.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

NCP pushes for grassroots support amid Eid holiday

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Key leaders of the recently launched National Citizen Party (NCP) are actively engaging in mass contact in their respective areas, capitalising on the Eid-ul-Fitr vacation.

As they prepare to contest the upcoming national election, many have travelled to their parliamentary constituencies to celebrate Eid and connect with local voters.

In the days leading up to Eid, NCP leaders conducted extensive outreach activities, including attending community iftar events and visiting villages, neighbourhoods, and local communities to interact with people.

Several key leaders told The Daily Star they aim to solidify their grassroots support ahead of the election, utilising the holiday period when people return home to celebrate Eid.

Party leaders said they would prioritise door-to-door campaigns over large-scale rallies and planned to meet families of those killed and injured during the July

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