

A CITY LEFT IN PANIC

4 die in Dhaka; residents in fear over cracks, tilted structures after yesterday's quake

DIPAN NANDY

The KP Ghosh Street in Dhaka's Kasaituli area is usually bustling.

The narrow lane, home to two schools and the Bismillah butcher's stall – known on social media for selling camel meat – was quieter than usual due to the Friday holiday.

Yet four pedestrians walking through the lane lost their lives instantly when a building's brick-built rooftop railing collapsed due to the strong earthquake yesterday morning.

Three of the victims were identified as Rafiul Islam, 21, a student of Sir Salimullah

Medical College; Abdur Rahim, 48, a fabric trader; and Rahim's son Abul Aziz Remon, 12. At least ten others were injured, most of whom had gathered to buy beef from the butcher's stall.

Brig Gen Md Mazharul Islam Khan, director of Sir Salimullah Medical College and Mitford Hospital, confirmed that the three were brought in dead and one of them died while undergoing treatment.

During a visit to Kasaituli, bloodstains were still visible in front of the building. Police had cordoned off the area, yet crowds of curious onlookers continued to gather despite repeated attempts by both the army

and police to disperse them.

Nayon Ahmed, owner of Bismillah butcher's stall, said, "My shop is always crowded. Twenty people work here. Allah saved them all. There was a thick tarpaulin over the shop, so when debris fell from above, it landed on that cover. Only one person was slightly injured."

Nearby shopkeeper Md Ali Adnan recounted, "My elder brother and I were inside the shop during the quake. My brother fell, and while helping him up, we suddenly heard a loud noise. I rushed there – only to see that a building's railing had collapsed on people."

Local resident Shaheen Hossain said the building was roughly 20 to 25 years old. It originally had six storeys, but two additional floors were added about four years ago. "A portion of the newly built balcony railing on the eighth floor collapsed," he said.

Another resident, Masuma Akhter, noted the timing spared greater tragedy. "Since it was Friday, the area was less crowded. Allah saved us. On a regular day,

more than 100 people could have died."

Including these four, at least ten people were killed and several hundred were injured after the earthquake jolted Dhaka and surrounding districts.

Across the capital, the Fire Service and Civil Defence reported several incidents.

In a press statement, Anwarul Islam, inspector at the fire service media cell, confirmed the details.

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Quake jolts country, causes widespread damage

STAR REPORT

The 5.7 magnitude earthquake that shook the country yesterday left a trail of damage, including causing cracks in numerous buildings, triggering fires, affecting infrastructure, and damaging shops in several districts.

According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, the tremor was recorded at 10:38am with epicentre in Madhabdi of Narsingdi, about 13km east of the Seismic Centre at Dhaka's Agargaon.

In Narsingdi, the quake triggered a fire at Ghorashal Thermal Power Plant's sub-station and caused disruption of electricity supply to the national grid for over four hours, said Md Enamul Haque, the plant's chief engineer.

The blaze erupted at 10:38am yesterday, damaging key components of the national grid sub-station and disrupting electricity supply, said Palash Fire Service and Civil Defence's Senior Station Officer Md Abdul Shahid.

He added that two firefighting units rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control.

Md Enamul Haque said the electricity supply was resumed at around 3:00pm.



In Narsingdi's Ghorashal Bazar area, many shops were left in disarray, with items scattered on the floors.

Alam Mia, 43, a footwear trader in the market, said, "My shop had various types of shoes and other items. When the quake started, everything fell off the shelves. The furniture was damaged as well. I have suffered losses of nearly Tk 6 lakh."

Aslam Mia, 40, a grocer in the same market, said many glass items in his shop were shattered.

Mufti Sala Uddin Ansari, director of Markasul Sunnah Tahfizul Qur'an Sunnah Madrasah on

Eidgah Road, said cracks had developed in four to five spots of their six-storey building.

In Gabtoli area of Sadar upazila, bricks falling from a building injured two people, said Saifur Rahman, a local.

At least two persons were killed and over 100 injured in the quake's aftermath in Narsingdi.

In Narayanganj, three buildings were tilted, and cracks developed in 10 other buildings, said fire service officials.

The tilted buildings are located in the Ati Housing area, while the 10 other buildings are in Hirajheel Residential Area, Al Islam Nagar, and Ronny City, said Miran Mia, station officer of Adamjee Fire Station.

Besides, a cotton warehouse was gutted following an electric short-circuit after the quake in Kuripara area under Bandar upazila, said Abdullah Al Arefin, deputy assistant director of the Narayanganj Fire Service and Civil Defence.

In Rajshahi University, a portion of the Sher-e-Bangla Fazlul Haque Hall was tilted after the earthquake, said the hall's Provost Prof Md Shariful Islam.

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WHAT TO DO WHEN EARTHQUAKE STRIKES

Stay calm. Protect yourself. Act fast.



DURING THE SHAKE

- Drop, cover, hold
- Stay away from glass
- Protect head and neck
- Stay indoors
- Move to open space, away from buildings and poles
- In a vehicle: Stop safely and stay inside

RIGHT AFTER QUAKE

- Check for injuries
- Avoid lifts
- Turn off gas and electricity
- Expect aftershocks

HELP OTHERS

- Assist children, elderly, and persons with disabilities
- Warn others about cracks, loose balconies, fallen wires
- Keep calm and guide people away from risky spots

DOS & DON'TS

- Don't panic. Keep an emergency kit
- Keep a power bank
- Follow Met office and Fire Service updates
- EMERGENCY NUMBERS**
Fire Service & Civil Defence
Nearest hospitals
City corporation hotlines

Preparedness saves lives. Know the steps. Stay alert.

Late referrals driving dengue deaths at DMCH

HELEMUL ALAM

Fourteen-year-old Akash Khan has been lying in critical condition in the dengue ward of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) since November 18.

A resident of Shariatpur, Akash was first admitted to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital that morning. Doctors later referred him to DMCH due to his worsening condition.

His parents brought him to Dhaka by bus because they could not afford an ambulance.

"It cost around Tk 1,000 for the three of us by bus. An ambulance would have cost eight to ten thousand," said his father, Farhad Khan. The journey took three hours.

Farhad said Akash had abdominal pain and nosebleeds, and his platelet count had dropped to 15,000, rising to 20,000 by Thursday morning.

Similarly, Mohammad Arafat, 13, from Barishal's Muladia, was admitted to the DMCH dengue ward on Wednesday after a seven-hour journey from his local hospital.

"I was treated at my upazila hospital for three days, and the doctor advised my parents to take me either to Barishal Medical College or a larger hospital in Dhaka," said Arafat.

Their stories reflect the situation at DMCH, which handles the country's most critical dengue cases.

According to DGHS, 353 dengue

patients have died and 88,893 have been hospitalised nationwide this year as of yesterday morning.

Meanwhile, among hospitals, DMCH recorded the highest number of deaths – 84 – treating 3,275 patients. The DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital in Mohakhali treated the most patients – 5,183 – but recorded 30 deaths.

Experts say delayed hospitalisation is a major contributor to the high death toll, as many critically ill patients are referred from outside districts.



Naznin Naher, in-charge of a DMCH dengue ward, said most critical cases come from outside Dhaka. "Patients often wait at home after the initial fever and arrive three or four days later, when their condition has already become severe."

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said many dengue patients arrive in extremely critical condition.

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Activists form a human chain near the southern gate of the parliament in Dhaka yesterday, demanding the release of renowned baul singer Abul Sarkar who was arrested on Thursday in connection with a case filed over hurting religious sentiments.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS