

DISASTERS UPDATE

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TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

National

Quake: New buildings at higher risk

TNN | Aug 29, 2016, 02.33 AM IST

MANALI: Three major and many small earthquakes on Saturday with epicentre in Kullu, just 10km deep in earth, have sent a wave of panic among people. Though the tremors recorded were of just 4.6 magnitude, experts say earthquakes of more than 7 magnitude can demolish many buildings in the district, causing large casualties.

The mountainous area of Kullu, which lies in seismic zone-V, has layers of mud and rocks which are unstable and offer weak foundation for buildings. Old-fashioned houses of Kullu which are built with local 'kath-kuni' architectural style have survived many earthquakes in past but new constructions, mostly unscientific and non-technical, are vulnerable to jolts. Experts say that an earthquake of magnitude more than 7.5 can demolish over 50% of the new constructions in the district.

Assistant town planner Chittar Lekha said, "Buildings in the planning area are being built keeping in view the mountainous geography, but those outside planning area are generally built by people themselves. They sometimes seek help of panchayat representatives but those buildings require a structure stability test."

Fire at textile godown triggers panic in Tvm

TNN | Aug 29, 2016, 11.34 AM IST



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Panic gripped city after a massive fire broke out in one of the buildings located at East Fort, in the proximity of Sree Padmanabhaswami Temple, on Sunday evening.

Fire broke out in the warehouses of two textile firms functioned in the Rajadhani building owned by Biju Ramesh. Since almost all commercial establishments in the building complex were having an off day, there were very few people in the building and hence a major tragedy was averted.

The most affected by the fire was Tamil Nadu-based prominent textile brand Pothy's, which occupied two halls in the second and third floor of the building, which they used to store their stock.

The lion's share of damaged property was the new stock of textiles they had brought here in view of Onam sales. Richmond Uniforms nearby too suffered considerable loss of property. Police said that the fire was spotted around 3pm by employees of the Pothy's Textiles. The employees said the fire started at the warehouse of Richmond Uniforms, which remained closed

Disaster mgmt authority's findings ignored

TNN | Aug 29, 2016, 12.13 PM IST

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Commercial activities in areas such as East Fort and highrise buildings with inadequate firefighting facilities was one of the major reasons pointed out in the city disaster management plan prepared by district disaster management authority, which makes the city prone to fire accidents.

Sunday's fire outbreak at East Fort proves that authorities concerned have not taken the report seriously.

The report had pointed out that fire and rescue services in the city lacked firefighting manpower and also there was shortage of emergency equipment. As per the report, fire station in Thiruvananthapuram has six water tenders and emergency tender with special rescue equipment, water truck, ambulance, jeep, trailer pump, portable pump and recovery vehicle one each. The Chackai station and Vizhinjam station too have two water tenders each. The report pointed out large number of closely built old timber framed buildings, highrise buildings with inadequate fire fighting facilities and slums, commercial activities in Chala, Palayam, East Fort, MG Road areas and small, medium

and hazardous industries in suburban areas as some of the reasons which make the city prone to fire incidents.

Mayor V K Prasanth said that the corporation is in the process of formulating an action plan for implementing the suggestions to address the issue of flooding not fire.

NDMA suggests 10-point plan to tackle floods

The Hindu, August 29, 2016 06:53 IST

An expert panel constituted by the National Disaster Management Authority has issued a 10-point plan to tackle floods.

“The plan has been issued to all cities ahead of the monsoon season. The action plan follows last year’s (devastating) Chennai floods,” Kapil Gupta, Urban Flooding expert from IIT Bombay and member and convener of the expert group for NDMA guidelines on urban flooding told *The Hindu* .

Some of the key points in the plan include establishment of urban flood /disaster management cell in each city with technically qualified person as nodal officer, efficient cleaning of drains and holding ponds, before the start of the monsoon.

The plan also suggests that in addition to getting rainfall “now casts” and forecasts from IMD, a nodal officer should review information about thunderstorms and heavy rainfall from METARS (an aviation routine weather report), which is updated every 30 minutes.

The information should be communicated to municipal commissioners concerned to enable them to issue alerts and take preventive measures, such as closing schools if heavy rainfall and flooding is expected.

The plan also suggested installation of portable pumps at chronic flooding locations.

Besides, it suggested mapping and listing of ownership and condition of water bodies in each city and subsequently develop a monitoring framework anchored with the Urban Local Bodies. Mr. Gupta said the panel had advised formation of high-level expert committee for each city with adequate authority to take decision on release of water from reservoirs. “During heavy rainfall this committee will have be the final authority to issue gate opening and floodwater releases from dams/reservoirs,” he said.

Suggests establishment of urban flood management cell in each city with technically qualified person as nodal officer

International

10 killed, 32 injured in bus crash in China

PTI | Aug 29, 2016, 08.59 AM IST

BEIJING: At least 10 people were killed and 32 others injured when a bus they were travelling in overturned in China's southwest Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on Sunday.

The 47-seat bus was approaching its destination in Nanning, capital of Guangxi, when it met with the accident on a highway, police said. The bus driver was among those killed. Thirty-two people were injured, five of whom seriously, police said.

Ling Minhui, an injured passenger, said she was waken up when the bus rammed into guardrails.

"All passengers were seated, but most did not fasten their seat belts," she said. The injured were sent to nearby hospitals, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The five seriously injured suffered brain and lumbar spine injuries, a doctor at the First Affiliated Hospital of Guangxi Medical University said, adding that one was in life-threatening condition.

Initial investigations showed the accident might have been triggered by a sudden health condition on part of the driver. Further probe was under way.

The accident initially triggered a traffic snarl, but it was eased later by officials.

*Compiled by
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