

Beat: Miscellaneous

14 dead, scores missing after flyover collapse in Bangladesh

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USPA News - At least fourteen people were killed on late Saturday and dozens more are feared missing after large parts of a flyover under construction collapsed in Bangladesh's southeastern port city of Chittagong, rescue workers said on Sunday. The accident happened at around 7:30 p.m. local time on Saturday when three concrete girders of the Bahaddarhat flyover collapsed onto construction workers and vegetable hawkers near a market in Chittagong, the second-largest city in Bangladesh.

It is feared up to 70 people may have been standing underneath the collapsed sections. Local residents claimed the initial response to the collapse was slow, but rescue operations were significantly hampered by angry people who staged violent protests. Some of the protesters prevented emergency vehicles from reaching the scene while others set fire to police vehicles, other vehicles, construction materials, shops, and the office of a construction firm. Fire officials said the three collapsed girders were each about 100 feet (30 meters) long and 7 feet (2.1 meters) wide. Fourteen people were confirmed to have been killed as of late Sunday, but witnesses said around 60 people may still be trapped underneath the debris. There were no official figures on the number of people trapped or missing. At least 50 people were taken to area hospitals for treatment, including a young man whose legs had to be cut off at the scene after they were crushed by a large piece of concrete. Among those injured were several people who were injured in clashes between police and protesters, and at least 12 others were injured when a wall collapsed at a mosque near the scene of the flyover. Construction of the 1.4-kilometer (0.86 mile) flyover began in December 2010 under supervision of the Chittagong Development Authority. Construction companies Parisha Enterprise and Meer Akter Enterprise were building the flyover at a cost of approximately 1.06 billion Bangladeshi taka (\$13 million).

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