



ADRC Highlights Vol.76

Asian Disaster Reduction Center Biweekly News

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➤ **26 July, Earthquake in Northern Japan: Observations by ADRC**

From July 31-August 1, 2003, ADRC dispatched an earthquake survey mission. Members were Senior Researcher Dr. Tomohiko Hatori, Researcher Takako Chinoi and Shingo Kochi, as well as two Visiting Researchers Vilayphong Sisomvang from Lao and Rachman Sobarna from Indonesia. They have provided us the following summary of their observations:

□ **Situation Report**

On Saturday 26 July, northeastern Japan was hit by a series of strong earthquakes followed by a succession of aftershocks. The first quake with a magnitude 5.5 hit at 00:13. The area was hit again by a second earthquake with a magnitude 6.2 at 07:13. Aftershocks jolted the area several times, including one at 16:56 with a magnitude 5.3. The Japan Meteorological Agency observed that the foreshock's maximum acceleration was about 2005 gal with east-west direction, which has become the highest record in the world.

The Miyagi prefecture, about 300 km north of Tokyo, sustained the greatest amount of earthquake related damage. According to the Miyagi prefecture government, 5,801 houses were damaged, and 73 houses were completely destroyed. 2,800 people were evacuated at the first phase, and there have been 569 reported injuries. Most of the injuries are not serious, and no deaths have been reported.



The earthquake triggered landslides and liquefactions as well. Recent heavy rains brought by Typhoon Etou on August 8 could make the situation more dangerous. 600 members of the Japanese Self Defense Force was sent to the region to remove rubble and to provide emergency water supplies to residents.

The latest series of quakes happened on only two months after a quake with a magnitude 7.0 struck Miyagi prefecture on May 26, injuring more than 100 people and damaging property, including historic monuments. The Miyagi government said the series of major quakes had caused damage estimated at



least 120 million yen (one million dollars) to the farming and fisheries industries in the area. For more information, please contact Dr. T. Hatori (hatori@adrc.or.jp) or S.Kochi (kochi@adrc.or.jp).

□ **Observations by Mr.Sisomvang from Lao**

It was a precious opportunity to visit the affected areas where earthquake occurred. I visited local town's social welfare center which had become the volunteer coordinator center. All staffs there were busy and working hard. Houses affected by the earthquake were old and constructed with weak materials. While walking around the area, I saw that many walls were broken out and some roads were sunk. Many tombstones on the mountain side fell down. I had a chance to visit one temporary shelter as well.

My impression after having visited the site was that the government in Japan is well-organized to deal with such a disaster. I recognized it by observing their implementation on organizing temporary shelters, health care treatment and providing food and water. On the recovery phase, people are active and quick on restoring the damaged property. Many Japanese people applying voluntary work were also impressive. Some disaster-related counter measure will be of reference to my country such as landslide prevention technique.

➤ **Nepal - Floods and Landslides**

Since the onset of monsoon rains, floods and landslides have affected geographically about two thirds of Nepal. As of 4 August 2003, the Department of Disaster Management of the Ministry of Home Affairs reported that floods and landslides have killed 130 people, 45 are missing and 69 injured. A total of 1,475 houses were completely destroyed and 3,281 families have been affected.

The floods and landslides have caused excessive damage to major highways across the country, disrupting road links between the capital and most of the outlying districts. According to media reports, the road between the capital and the Narayangarh has been severed as a massive landslide swept away a 30 metre bridge in the Narayangarh-Muglin section. Efforts continue to re-open the Tribhuvan and Prithvi highways by removing landslide debris. The three-day downpour in Makwanpur district has resulted in landslides at a number of places along the Hetauda-Lothar section of the Mahendra highway throwing the normal traffic out of gear.

Heavy damages have been reported in Parsa, Rautahat, Chitwan and Dang districts. Landslides have disrupted traffic not only between the capital and the Terai region but also in 50 places in different districts.

If you have comments or requests for this Newsletter, please write to ADRC at the address on the right.

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