

# CHATTOGRAM CITY

## Quake risk looms amid building code violations

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

While Chattogram city is already vulnerable to severe earthquakes due to its geographical location, experts warn that unplanned urbanisation, widespread building code violations, and poor monitoring have further heightened the risks.

At least 70 percent of the port city's multi-storey buildings are at risk of collapse in the event of a major earthquake of magnitude 7 or higher, they said.

According to the Chattogram Development Authority, the city has 4,11,721 buildings – 3,87,757 are up to six storeys high, 13,480 are seven to ten storeys, 415 are



**A six-storey building in Chattogram's Mansurabad area tilted and leaned onto an adjacent structure following Friday's earthquake.**

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Monsurabad tilted further towards an adjacent building. It had previously tilted during a 2016 quake, along with 11 other buildings in the city. A 6.1-magnitude earthquake in 1997 caused a five-storey building to collapse, killing over 20 people.

Small quakes, experts say, are often warnings of a major disaster.

"There is a risk of damage to 65-70 percent of multi-storey buildings in the port city in case of an earthquake of magnitude 7 to 8," said CDA chief engineer Kazi Hasan Bin Shams.

He said unlike Rajuk, CDA does not have a structural and design cell, and its manpower shortage makes regular inspections even more difficult.

Dr Rashidul said in Bangladesh, Chattogram and Sylhet fall in the highest-risk category. Yet many residents ignore building codes, and numerous buildings are constructed without proper expert supervision.

"CDA cannot avoid responsibility and must employ more manpower to monitor these irregularities," he added.

To minimise risks, Dr Rashidul emphasised identifying vulnerable buildings and retrofitting them with modern machinery and equipment.

Very old structures that cannot be repaired should be demolished, he said.

Residents, he stressed, must strictly follow building codes while constructing new buildings.

He also called for reducing groundwater extraction and prioritising the use of surface water.

Delwar Majumder, former president of the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh, Chattogram, said it is the duty of relevant government authorities to ensure compliance with building codes. "While we cannot construct fully earthquake-proof buildings due to high costs, we can at least make them earthquake-tolerant and minimise casualties," he said.

In Chattogram, the main concern is the lack of space for rescue due to the absence of emergency entry and exit routes in many buildings, he added.

Asked why the tilted buildings from the 2016 earthquake have not been demolished, the CDA chief engineer said the authority can only identify risky structures, not knock them down. Demolition is the responsibility of the Chattogram City Corporation.

"We have identified 100 risky buildings and submitted the list to CCC," he said.

Contacted, CCC Mayor Shahadat Hossain said he was not aware of the details. "I am speaking to my officials and will find out why the risky buildings have not yet been demolished," he said.

## SKOP declares blockade over leasing out port terminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Chattogram unit of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) yesterday announced blockades on the approach roads to Chattogram port and protest programmes in all districts of the Chattogram division on Wednesday, protesting leasing out New Mooring Container, Laldia Char, and Pangaon port terminals – to foreign operators.

Kazi Sheikh Nurullah Bahar, general secretary of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, Chattogram division, made the announcement at the divisional trade union convention held at July Revolution Hall of the Chattogram Press Club.

The convention was organised by the SKOP Chattogram unit to press home a 13-point demand, including revising labour laws, ensuring trade union rights under a single law, and fixing fair wages.

Leaders and members of various workers' organisations attended. Bahar, chairing the convention, said two terminals had already been handed over to foreign operators, but details of the agreements were unknown.

"A lawsuit has been filed regarding the NCT handover. The court has ordered suspension of all contract activities until the hearing, but the order is not being followed," he alleged.

He vowed to force the government to cancel the decisions to hand over the terminals.

As per the protest schedule, blockades will be enforced from 10:00am to 1:00pm on Wednesday at the port approach points in Agrabad, Boropole and Mailer Matha. Protest rallies will also be held in all districts. Labour leaders expressed concern that leasing out Chattogram port to foreign companies would cripple the economy and leave 90 percent of port workers jobless.

## Frobel Academy hosts climate awareness concert



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chattogram-based Frobel Academy yesterday hosted its Annual Concert 2025, based on the theme of "Climate Change", at the United Convention Hall in the port city's Bahaddarhat.

The educational institution organised the programme in three segments, where students presented songs, musical dramas, and thematic performances highlighting various climate change-related challenges.

These acts, addressing one of the more pressing global issues, showcased the students' creativity and emphasised the school's commitment to educating young minds about the far-reaching impacts of climate change on individuals, communities, and ecosystems.

Through its sustainability initiative, Frobel Cares, the school sought to inspire meaningful action and encourage the adoption of environmentally responsible practices.

Dr Bhaskar Chakraborty, consultant oncologist at Ahsania Mission Cancer & General Hospital; Mohammed Zahirul Islam, managing director of PHP Family; Zohair Taherali, finance director of BSRM Group; and Abdul Qadir, director of BSRM Group, presented the thoughtful event.

Frobel Academy's principal and director, Huwra (Tehseen) Zohair; co-founder and director Sabeen Aameir; and Head Nusrat Khan, represented the school.

## Injured during

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the rest are men, he added.

He also said the hospital is providing the highest level of care and has made special arrangements to ensure extra attention for the patients.

Meanwhile, 66 people received treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital after being injured in the earthquake. Of them, five are still undergoing treatment.

"One of them is in the ICU. His condition is critical," said DMCH Director Brig Gen Md Asaduzzaman.

## Life inside DU female halls

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fell off in the canteen and other areas, while the Shikder Monoara Bhaban – housing 62 students – was declared safe by engineers.

Jannatul Ferdaous Munni, a Philosophy student, said she panicked during the tremor while studying in the reading room. "There was shouting everywhere. I thought the building was collapsing. In the rush, I slipped on the stairs and fell," she said. Doctors have advised her 15 days of bed rest.

Dr Mahbuba Sultana, provost of the hall, visited all damaged areas and checked on the injured student. "The buildings are old, but engineers confirmed there is no immediate danger. We're doing our best to comfort the students," she

said. Security has been increased, and gates will remain locked only at night, with the main gate open.

At Shamsunnahar Hall, resident Marzia Zahan Momo said the tremor caused panic but no injuries. "Some areas developed cracks, and the chief engineer came to inspect everything," she said.

Sanzida Masud Momo, general secretary of the hall union, reported cracks in six washroom pillars in the Mid and Honours Buildings, one damaged room on the fifth floor, and plaster falling from several areas.

The Extension Building near the kitchen also developed cracks. The hall accommodates nearly 1,400 students, with around 96 on each floor.

Herem Akhter Era, social

welfare secretary of Sufia Kamal Hall Union, said the hall's four buildings sustained minor structural damage.

Prattyasha Building had cracks in one room; Pradipta Building saw damage in seven rooms and one common space; Prattay Building experienced cracks in two rooms and a corridor.

Each room houses six to eight students, while the only legal guest room accommodates 25 girls temporarily until they receive permanent rooms, she added.

The hall's provost Prof Salma Nasrin said engineers had checked all buildings. "By the grace of Allah, all my students are safe. There is no cause for concern, and the authorities will take the best steps for their safety," she said.

At Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall, VP Tasnim Akhter Alif Nabila said minor cracks were found, but there was no major structural damage. However, the chief engineer declared the house tutor's residential area unsafe due to the age of the building.

She added that all students were safe and no injuries occurred.

## Efforts on

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He declared that NCP would remain on the streets to resist such "plots".

He also demanded swift execution of the death sentence handed to the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, stating that she must be brought back to the country.

Nahid also criticised the Indian government for giving shelter to Hasina. He urged New Delhi to return her and rebuild ties with Dhaka.

NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary said, "As long as we are alive, the Awami League will not be allowed to do politics. They must be brought under trial."

## 33kg black crocker caught in St Martin's

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A rare 33-kilogramme black crocker fish, locally known as "kalo popa", was caught off the coast of St Martin's Island.

Abdul Gani, a fisherman from the island's western shore known for landing large fish, brought in the catch early yesterday.

Gani said his crew cast nets near the western side of Chhera Dwip at dawn.

Around 8:00am, the large black crocker got trapped in the net.

A video at noon showing Gani carrying the fish on his shoulder to the local market later spread on social media, drawing crowds to see the catch.



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NWPGL, Soydabad, Sirajganj.

GD-2527