

Highly risky Dhaka buildings still in use

PG Hospital, JnU, JU buildings on Rajuk's list of vulnerable structures

HELEMUL ALAM and DIPAN NANDY

Munni was tending to her six-year-old daughter at the paediatric cardiology ward of Bangladesh Medical University (PG Hospital) on Friday when the 17-storey building suddenly began to shake violently.

"We were totally caught off guard. I took my child in my lap and stood in the middle of the ward. I thought we were going to die," she told The Daily Star yesterday, recalling the harrowing experience.

Her words echo the panic that swept through patients and doctors inside the Block-D building during the 5.7-magnitude tremor that jolted Dhaka and surrounding districts.

The building had been flagged as structurally vulnerable in early 2023, yet it continues to operate like dozens of other risky structures across the capital.

More than two and a half years have passed since 42 buildings in Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narayanganj were declared "highly risky" and ordered to be demolished within three months. But only two have been torn down so far.

Friday's tremor laid bare not only the vulnerability of these structures but also the failure of authorities to act despite repeated warnings.

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartirpakkha (Rajuk) moved only after the quake.

The regulatory authority found about 300 structures under its



Marked as "risky" for many years, a building of Sir Salimullah Medical College Mitford Hospital on the capital's Mitford Road continues to operate. Following the recent earthquakes, at least 300 large and small buildings in the capital have been identified as vulnerable. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Form task force for earthquake readiness
Yunus directs authorities

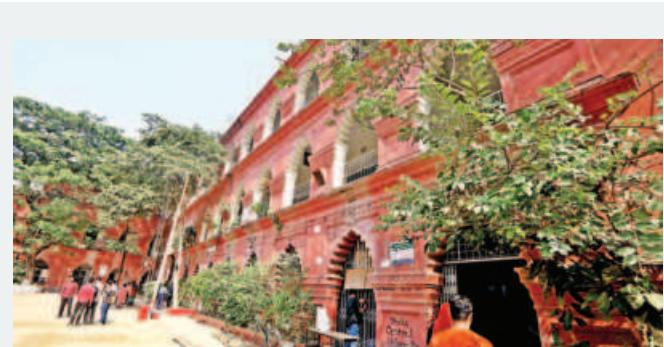
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday directed the authorities concerned to form a task force comprising government and private officials as well as experts to undertake urgent measures for earthquake preparedness.

Presiding over an emergency meeting of experts and officials at his office in Tejgaon, he said expert advice is also needed on what kinds of drills will be required as part of preparedness.

"We do not want to remain idle, nor do we want to take any unscientific steps. Please submit your

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- ⌚ In early 2023, 42 "highly risky" buildings were marked for demolition
- ⌚ Only two have been torn down so far
- ⌚ Friday's quake damaged over 300 structures
- ⌚ Rajuk calls for urgent reassessment, joint action

jurisdiction damaged in Friday's quake.

The structures include two buildings of Badda Alatunnessa High School and College, which were also on Rajuk's list of 42 highly risky buildings.

Inspectors found cracks in several columns in those buildings and ordered classes to be suspended.

Under a World Bank-assisted Urban Resilience project implemented between 2020 and 2022, Rajuk conducted a "Rapid Visual Assessment" of 3,252 buildings owned by government, semi-government, and autonomous bodies in Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narayanganj.

A "Preliminary Engineering Assessment (PEA)" was then conducted on 579 of the buildings identified as comparatively vulnerable. The PEA marked 42 buildings as very risky and in need of demolition. These buildings belong to eight government and autonomous bodies.

SEE LIST OF 42 RISKY BUILDINGS ON THE DAILY STAR ONLINE

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PORT, LDC GRADUATION Unelected govt can't take long-term decisions Says Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said an unelected government cannot take decisions that have long-term implications.

"Look at Chattogram Port, the gateway to Bangladesh's economy. What happens there shapes the lives of millions. Recent long-term decisions about the port are not routine," he said in a Facebook post last night.

He added that the deal was a "strategic commitment over a national asset, pushed forward by an interim government without a democratic mandate to bind future generations."

The BNP leader said the situation at the port mirrors the approach to LDC graduation, where "strategic options are shut off, public debate is dismissed as inconvenient, and valid concerns

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16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

For 16 days starting November 25, the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women is observed worldwide. Under this year's theme, UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls, The Daily Star will publish a story every alternate day across its pages, tracing how digital and offline abuse shape women's lives in Bangladesh.

When danger strikes, where can women turn?

As violence persists, survivors face a maze of fragmented services and low visibility

NILIMA JAHAN

Since Sharmin Akter (not her real name), 40, from Gazipur's Kapsia, was married at just 12, she has endured relentless violence and abuse, describing the daily ordeal like "three meals

a day".

"What didn't he beat me for? If the rice was too soft, he slapped me; if it was too hard, he punched me.... If I visited my mother's house, he beat me again, often in public. He broke my hand twice; my whole body still carries the

"Even then, my husband continued to abuse me psychologically," she said, adding that he issued threats, spread rumours about her, and had followed her to assault her again.

According to the Violence Against Women (VAW) Survey



SILENCE IN NUMBERS

- 64% never told anyone about the violence
- 39% said disclosure felt unnecessary
- 14% feared losing family honour; 13% feared public disgrace
- Only 7% sought legal action in the past year

Antibiotics not working on 4 in 10 ICU patients

IEDCR data shows alarming rise in AMR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four in every 10 patients admitted to intensive care units (ICUs) are not responding to available antibiotics due to their overuse and misuse, according to government data released yesterday, raising fresh

WHAT NEW FINDINGS REVEAL

Presenting the data, Prof Zakir Hossain Habib, chief scientific officer of the IEDCR, said the surveillance used case-based data from 13 hospitals and lab-based data from eight hospitals and diagnostic centres.

Antibiotic-resistant bacteria found in 41% ICU samples

- ⌚ Use of second-tier antibiotics jumps to 91%
- ⌚ 89% of ICU samples show multidrug resistance
- ⌚ Misuse, over-prescription, self-medication driving AMR

antimicrobial medicines, making infections difficult or impossible to treat and increasing the risk of severe illness, disability, and death.

Health experts cited overprescription, patients' ignorance and negligence in not completing antibiotic courses, excessive use of antibiotics in livestock and fisheries, poor infection control in hospitals, inadequate hygiene and sanitation, and the lack of new antibiotics as key drivers of AMR.

They warned that rising resistance will lead to more critical illnesses, prolonged hospital stays, treatment failures, higher mortality, greater healthcare costs, and reduced productivity.

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Researchers analysed 123 drug-bug combinations and compared them with last year's results. The data show that susceptibility rates fell for 79 combinations, improved for 38, and remained unchanged for six, indicating that more antibiotics are becoming ineffective.

"More and more antibiotics are showing resistance to different antibiotics," he said.

In ICUs, 71 antibiotics were tested against five pathogens. Only five organism-drug combinations showed susceptibility above 80 percent, while one fell between 60 and 80 percent. All others were below 60 percent.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mob violence, moral policing and online abuse are pushing violence against women in Bangladesh beyond private spaces, speakers said yesterday.

At a roundtable titled "Violence against women survey 2024: translating evidence into action," organised by The Daily Star and UNFPA at The Daily Star Centre, they warned that unless political, religious and state actors treat the issue as a national priority, the situation will continue to worsen.

marks...

"I didn't know where to go, who could help me, or what I could do. My children were very young. I had no education, no support, and nowhere to turn."

She found the courage to leave only after marrying off her daughter.

2024, conducted by BBS and UNFPA, three in every four women in Bangladesh—76 percent—face such violence, yet 51.5 percent still do not know where to report it. Awareness is slightly higher in urban areas (50.7 percent) than rural (47.5 percent).

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Normalisation of abuse eroding women's rights

Speakers tell Star-UNFPA roundtable



Violence [against women] is part of a long chain of discrimination. If discrimination remains, we cannot remove violence.



SHIREEN HUQ
Rights activist

concerns about the growing threat of antibiotic resistance.

The latest findings from the National Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Surveillance by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) show an alarming rise in antibiotics losing effectiveness.

Use of "watch group" antibiotics has surged from 77 percent last year to 91 percent this year. These are second-tier antibiotics that should be used only when first-line antibiotics are ineffective. They carry a higher risk of driving antimicrobial resistance and therefore require stricter monitoring and controlled use.

The AMR surveillance, conducted on 96,477 patients between July

and June 2025, was unveiled at IEDCR's Mohakhali office yesterday to mark the ongoing World AMR Awareness Week.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to

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antimicrobial medicines, making infections difficult or impossible to treat and increasing the risk of severe illness, disability, and death.

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