



FLOOD RELIEF

A nation united, a DU not seen in years

SHUCHISMITA TITHI

"Move aside! Move aside!"
"Please don't gather here; let us take these inside quickly!"

These were the calls echoing through the TSC premises of Dhaka University yesterday, as student volunteers carried relief goods on their heads, one after another, tirelessly moving the supplies into the TSC cafeteria and indoor sports room.

For the past two days, students of DU have been working round the clock to collect and organise relief goods and funds for the flood-affected people in 12 districts across the country.

The scenes were nothing short of extraordinary. Vehicles of all kinds — private cars, pickup trucks, and even large trucks — lined up outside of TSC as people from all walks of life brought in donations. From small children bringing their piggy banks to elderly citizens offering whatever they could.

Such a display of unity and compassion has not been seen in DU for a long time, particularly not in the last 15 years of the Awami League regime, when only Chhatra League members called the shots.

The campaign began on Thursday morning, under the banner of Anti-



Discrimination Student Movement, and was going on till yesterday night.

Ten-year-old Ihaan stood outside Dhaka University's TSC with his little piggy bank in hand, accompanied by his parents. The young boy was determined to do his part for the flood-affected people.

Ihaan was not alone. People from all walks of life — corporate workers, day

labourers, rickshaw pullers, etc. — flocked to the university, bringing whatever they could, whether it was money, dry food, dates, medicine, sanitary napkins, clothes, or drinking water.

"I wanted to help the flood-affected people. I wish everyone would come forward to help," said 12-year-old Raisa Mehjabin, a sixth grader.

Marina Akhter, a homemaker who came all the way from Mirpur yesterday, said, "Since students of the anti-discrimination movement are collecting funds, I have decided to donate from a place of trust."

Not only were students from every department and dormitories of DU participating, but those from other institutions also joined in.

At the entrance of TSC, a public relief booth has been set up, where donations are registered before being moved to the indoor sports room for packaging.

The relief items are then stored in the TSC cafeteria, ready to be dispatched to the flood-affected areas by covered vans.

Several vehicles had already left for the affected regions on Thursday night, according to Nayeem, a student from one of Dhaka University's seven affiliated colleges.

Ashrefa, a DU student, shared that by Thursday night alone, students collected Tk 29,73,173 through various means.

Meanwhile, by yesterday 8:00pm, the total cash collected (excluding money coming through bank and mobile financial services) had risen to Tk 86,22,172, said Abu Baker Mojumder, a coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and the relief campaign.

"The relief goods we collected yesterday [Thursday], have been sent to Feni, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Cumilla, Akhaura, and Kasba this [Friday] morning. We are also sending funds to our coordinators in Chattogram so that they can get the necessary items themselves and provide those to the flood-affected people there," he said.

"Trucks will leave at 12:00am [early today] with the relief items we collected today [Friday]," he added.

Bhuiyan Asaduzzaman, a member of the Liaison Committee of Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, highlighted the unity of people from all classes, professions, and political identities in running the relief camp.

"Our struggle was against the binary identity — the walls that were erected

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'Not sure if they are alive or dead'

Say family members of flood victims

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

"I am not sure whether my sick mother and pregnant wife are alive or dead," said Abdul Kaiyum, a private job holder in Dhaka, while still in shock.

Abdul Kaiyum was unable to communicate with his family members for the last four days as mobile towers in the Feni district were not working due to the severe ongoing flood situation.

"I am concerned about my sick mother, pregnant wife and my cousin who is physically challenged," he added.

Kaiyum's family live at ward-9 in GM Union of Fulgazi upazila in Feni district.

Like Kaiyum, many others could not communicate with their family members.

The situation in Cumilla, Noakhali and Feni has been particularly worrying as the Muhuri and Feni rivers kept swelling throughout the last three days.

Many students said they were only able to reach their family over the phone three days back.

Over 90 percent of mobile towers in Feni were not working at the time of writing this report. Feni has seen the worst of the floods, disrupting service at 590 out of 656 towers, as per BTRC.

"I could not communicate with my family till now. But today [yesterday] a team informed me that they rescued my family members from their home at Chhagalnaiya upazila. But I am worried as my brother went missing," Sabbir Hossain Sifat, a student of Dhaka University, told this newspaper.

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Govt mobilised 'full force' to combat floods: Rizwana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government is working "collectively with full force" to tackle the ongoing flash flood situation, said Water Resources Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday.

With the help of everyone, swift and effective measures are being taken to rescue people from remote areas, she said.

She made the remarks while responding to journalists' questions after visiting various flood-affected areas in Habiganj Sadar upazila, according to a media release.

Rizwana, also the adviser for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ministry, expressed sincere gratitude to the students and general public who have been participating spontaneously alongside the government in providing services to the people arriving at the shelters.

She mentioned that discussions will be held regarding "the release of water from upstream in India without prior warning."

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More than just NUMBERS

A 16-year-old orphan fatally shot in the head in Bogura. A 24-year-old honours student shot dead by AL activists in Mymensingh. Another 28-year-old electric worker, fatally shot in the head in Dhaka. At least 400 lives (the actual number could be much higher) were lost when law enforcers opened fire on protesters during the recent unrest. But these victims are not just statistics; they are children, parents, and friends. In this report, we try to know the stories of three such names among these tragic numbers.



Pellets pierced his eyes, head and body

16-yr-old Shuvo killed in police firing in Bogura

MOSTAFA SHABUJ, Bogura

Md Siam Shuvo, a 16-year-old orphan from the Haddipatti area of Bogura town, was the first person to be killed in the district, during the student protests for quota reform in government jobs, on July 19.

Shuvo lived with his foster parents Ashik, a bus driver in Haddipatti area, and Shapla Khatun.

He used to collect old plastic bottles and scraps from around the town and sell them to recycling shops. The money he earned, he would give to his foster mother.

On the afternoon of July 19, Shuvo went out to collect scraps in the town's Amtola area like any other day. Around 4:00pm, protesters from the Anti-Discriminatory Student Movement were blocking the Satmata-Tinmatha road. Police tried to disperse them by spraying hot water from a water cannon, but they were unsuccessful.

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'Sagor died a martyr'

Say family members of 24-year-old who was shot dead by AL activists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Md Redwan Hossain Sagor, 24, left his home on the afternoon of July 19, saying he was going to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. Sagor was a regular blood donor.

However, Sagor joined other students who were protesting for quota reforms in government jobs, and died as Awami League activists opened fire on protesters near the Alamgir Monsur Memorial (Minto) College area of Mymensingh city.

"We thought he went to the hospital to donate blood as usually does. However, in the evening, we came to know he died in



a clash," said Sagor's father Mohammad Asaduzzaman, who runs a small business.

"All hopes of our family have been

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Adiba still waits for her father

28-year-old Mobarak died after a bullet pierced through his head



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Mobarak Hossain, 28, went outside his house in Dhaka's Kadamtoli area on

the afternoon of July 19 to buy chips for his two-and-half-year-old daughter Mehrunnesa Adiba.

Soon afterwards, he was hit by a bullet in his head as law enforcers fired at student protesters, who were demanding for quota reform, in the neighbourhood.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead. His body was taken to his village home in Ananda Bazar area of Karimganj municipality in Kishoreganj the next day. He was buried at a local graveyard there.

Little Adiba, who is yet to figure out what happened to her father, still waits

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Details of chief adviser's relief fund announced

STAR REPORT

The government has expressed its appreciation for the many who are eager to assist those affected by the recent floods, according to a message from the press secretary to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

Interested individuals can send their contributions to the following account of the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund.

Account name: Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund; Sonali Bank Corporate Branch, Chief Adviser's Office; Account Number: 010733004093.

The government assures that all donated funds will be used for relief and welfare and that proper records will be maintained.

MURDER CASE

Menon placed on five-day remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Rashed Khan Menon, president of Workers Party and key leader of Awami League-led 14-Party Alliance, on a five-day remand in a case filed over the death of 45-year-old trader Abdul Wadud in the city's New Market area during the quota protests on July 19.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ali Haider passed the order after police produced him before court seeking a 10-day remand, Md Liakat Ali, a sub-inspector working in the court, told The Daily Star.

The defence also sought bail along with cancellation of the remand appeal.

Menon, a former MP who had also served in ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's cabinet, was arrested in Gulshan on Thursday.

On August 21, Abdur Rahman, brother-in-law of the victim, filed the case with New Market Police

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Scores of dead fish lay on the surface of Dhanmondi lake. Locals have alleged that the fish were poisoned. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS