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Chief Adviser to the interim government Dr Muhammad Yunus meets leaders from various NGOs to discuss the recent flood situation in the country. The meeting took place at the state guest house Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: PIB

DEALING WITH FLOOD

Chief adviser calls for utilising NGOs expertise

UNB, Dhaka

Interim government Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday emphasised utilising local knowledge and NGO expertise to efficiently manage the flood situation and post-flood activities.

"NGOs are a power of Bangladesh. We need to materialise the dream of the youth. We can do that. We need to tackle the flood together in a coordinated way," Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam quoted Prof Yunus as saying.

Alam briefed reporters at state guesthouse Jamuna following a meeting between Prof Yunus and NGO representatives.

The meeting, which lasted about two hours, included NGOs collaborating with the government to address the ongoing flood crisis. Around 44 NGOs, including small and community-level organisations, were invited.

The press secretary said the meeting stressed the importance of coordination among all partners and discussed strategies for conducting rehabilitation and relief distribution efforts in a unified manner.

"We are impressed by how people have engaged with the same spirit we saw during the student movement," Alam quoted Prof Yunus, also noting the remarkable relief distribution efforts at TSC, Dhaka.

The discussion also touched on post-flood challenges, including restoring telecom connectivity and electricity supply. Alam highlighted the vital role NGOs have consistently played in Bangladesh's development, dating back to 1971.

Adviser Ali Imam Majumder, SDG Coordinator Lamiya Morshed, economist Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam, Executive Director of Campaign for Popular Education Rasheda K Choudhury, ActionAid Bangladesh chief Farah Kabir, and Brac Executive Director Asif Saleh were among those present. In response to a question from UNB, Asif Saleh stressed the need for mobilising international funds to address the flood situation.

FLASH FLOOD

290 medical teams deployed in Chattogram

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Chattogram Civil Surgeon yesterday said they have formed 290 medical teams to combat the flood situation.

"Our medical teams are ready to combat any situation in the aftermath of flood," said Dr Ilias Chowdhury, Chattogram civil surgeon.

People stranded in different upazilas - including Fatikchhari, Hathazari, Rangunia and Razoan in Chattogram district - urgently need purified water, as almost all the tube wells and other sources of drinking water have been submerged.

Although flood water started receding in several areas after rainfall stopped

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Student volunteers stocking, sorting and packaging relief materials inside TSC complex of DU for the third day in a row, to be sent to flood affected victims across the country. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

FROM TSC to flood zones

Sea of relief supplies fills DU campus

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Sacks and sacks of relief materials are being lined up inside the TSC complex of Dhaka University. They are then sorted, packaged and loaded on trucks, to be carried to flood affected areas.

The TSC cafeteria and games room have been completely filled with these materials - everything from dry food and medicine to clothing and drinking water.

With no more room inside, students have started placing the sacks in front of the auditorium, and even on the TSC field.

From a bird's eye view, half of the field now resembles a sea of relief packages, a powerful symbol of collective effort. The atmosphere at Dhaka University is electric with unity and purpose.

People from all walks of life, from corporate workers to day labourers, continue to pour into the campus for the third day in a row, each bringing what they can to support the flood-affected communities.

One such contributor, Aslam Hossain, a rickshaw-van driver, even

refused to take fare from a group of students carrying relief supplies.

"I too wanted to contribute from my end. This group of students was working for the flood-affected people, who have been going through indescribable sufferings. I have just done my part," Aslam said.

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

With the influx of contributions, the entire DU campus has transformed into a center of hope, a place where the unified willpower of the nation is on full display.

Some bring their relief in private cars, some in vans, and others in small trucks.

But regardless of how they arrive, each donation adds to the growing mountain of supplies that promises to bring comfort to the flood victims.

"We as students have to stand by the people. It's our responsibility to help when our people are facing a crisis," said Farid Uddin, a former DU student.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

More than just NUMBERS

A 15-year-old shot fatally through the side of his head in Dhaka. Another 17-year-old shot to death in a similar manner in the capital. And a teacher from Bogura hacked to death by AL activists for trying to support his students. 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.

'I realised how good my son was only after his death'

Keeps telling father of 15-yr old shot dead in Mirpur

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and SHARIFUL ISLAM

Fifteen-year-old Mahfuzur Rahman took to the streets of Mirpur on July 19 for two reasons - to stand against the discriminatory quota system in government jobs and to protest the government's crackdown on students.

As the students protested, suddenly law enforcers, along with ruling party members, opened fire on the crowd.

As bullets flew, one found its mark in Mahfuzur's head. Within moments, the young boy collapsed, his life cruelly cut short.

"I realised how good my son was only after his death," said Abdul Mannan, his father.

A rickshaw van puller by profession, Mannan had always worried that his son, who spent much of his free time playing with friends, might go astray. But his fears were misplaced.

"My son sacrificed his life to free the people from an autocratic government," he said, the pain in his voice was palpable.

He added, "My innocent son was killed heinously. I want justice."

This correspondent met the grieving family in their small, rented home in Madina Nagar, Mirpur 11.

Mahfuzur's mother, Mussammad Begum, is inconsolable.

She fainted halfway through Mannan recounting the horrors of that fateful day, only to wake up to the same, unbearable reality.

"My heart continues to bleed since I lost my son," she cried.

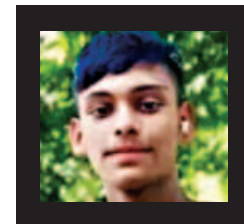
Mahfuzur was the only son of Mannan and Begum, born after three daughters. He was the apple of their eyes.

The family had pinned their dreams on Mahfuzur's shoulders. After passing his HSC exams, they hoped Mahfuzur would join the Bangladesh Army, a dream that held the promise of lifting them out of poverty.

But now, those dreams lie shattered, thanks to law enforcers' bullets.

"Initially I was worried and decided not to let him go out. But he deceived me, saying he would just go to Friday

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



'Police killed my son on Jul 18'

Says father of 17-year old shot dead in Badda

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

"Of our four sons, Ahadun was the most meritorious. Police took his life on July 18."

This is what Mujibur Rahman, a shopkeeper in Dhaka's Purba Badda area, told this correspondent recounting the day he was killed.

His son, Md Ahadun Kabir, 17, was an SSC equivalent examination candidate for next year from Hazi Sekander Ali Technical School in the area.

Besides studying, Ahadun used to help his father in their grocery shop at Badda area of Dhaka.

"On July 18, Ahadun left the shop for home in the evening. He reached home and shared mangoes with his

younger brother Utsob, then went out again. Later, as he did not return even after a long time, we got worried," Mujibur said.

"Meanwhile, serious clashes between protesters and police involving firing of bullets ensued in Badda and adjacent areas. Amid this, I went out to search for my son, but did not find him that night," he said.

Mujibur said on July 19 they came to know from TV channels about two unidentified bodies at Dhaka Medical College

morgue, and went there.

"We found our Ahadun's lifeless body lying at the morgue. He was hit by two bullets in his head near right ear, and his waist. However, we faced a lot of difficulty to receive his body

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



'My husband was hacked by Awami League men'

Says wife of Selim, a school teacher killed in Bogura protests

MOSTAFA SHABUJ, Bogura

Selim Hossain, an assistant teacher of Muri Light High School in Bogura's Kahaloo upazila, stood by his students during the quota reform protest.

He couldn't just stay silent while the streets of the country were painted red with the blood of students, said his wife.

For this 'crime', he was hacked to death by Awami League activists on August 4.

Selim has been living in Telipukur area of Bogura town for past nine years with his family.

"My husband loved his students. He loved this country. As the students'

protests intensified, he said he could no longer remain home, and joined the protests. He sacrificed his life for the students," said his wife Jasmine Akhter.

She held her one and half-year-old son on her lap as she spoke to this correspondent.

Uzzal Hossain, his younger brother, said, "Bhaia was not involved in politics. He never went to any meeting, rally or demonstration. But the inhumane violence inflicted on the protesting students made him wary.

He felt restless at home, watching news channels and surfing the internet to know what was going on. Eventually,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

