

‘We all are one family’  
Says Prof Yunus on occasion of Christmas

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday said people of all religions are like one big family in this country.

“We do not want to hear the words -- minority and majority. In this country, we all are one family; we will all live together -- this is our dream. Everyone has to come forward to realise this dream,” he said.

“We are the same people. Our identity as people comes first, then religion. Every religion has a message of peace. We have to establish that message of peace within ourselves. Only then the differences will be removed,” the chief adviser said.

Prof Yunus made the remarks while exchanging greetings with representatives of the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas at the State Guest House Jamuna yesterday.

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Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus exchanges greetings with representatives of the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas at the State Guest House Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: CHIEF ADVISER’S OFFICE

Project costs higher here than in India

Says railways adviser, inaugurates new train on Dhaka-Khulna route

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Railways Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan yesterday said the cost of any project in the country is higher than in other neighbouring countries, including India.

He urged everybody concerned, including railway engineers, to work sincerely so that project costs can be reduced. Otherwise, Bangladesh Railway will not be able to give expected services to its passengers, he added.

He was speaking at a programme at Kamalapur Railway Station to formally inaugurate a train on Dhaka-Khulna route via Padma Bridge for the first time.

Before his inauguration, a Dhaka-bound Jahanabad Express left Khulna carrying over 500 passengers, spending around four hours.

BR also launched another intercity train, Ruposhi Bangla, on Dhaka-Benapole route yesterday, ending a long wait for the shorter route between the capital and the south-western regions.

The 169-km line from Dhaka to Jashore has cut short the travel time by half. The Tk 39,246 crore project, formally known as Padma Bridge Rail Link Project, is the biggest project for BR in terms of cost, over half of which is being provided by China as a loan.

At the programme, Fouzul said railway is the most cost-effective transport, but rail is facing many problems,

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We’ve many things to offer each other  
Says Pranay Verma on Indo-Bangla ties

UNB, Dhaka

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma has said he remains optimistic about Dhaka-Delhi relations despite changes happening around.

The two countries can really offer each other something that they do not need to go elsewhere to find, he said.

“This is how we look at the relationship. We have so many things to offer each other with our growing capabilities and rising ambitions to grow and develop,” he said.

He reiterated that they strongly support a “democratic, stable, peaceful, progressive, and inclusive” Bangladesh.

Pranay Verma made the remarks during an interaction with diplomatic correspondents at the High Commission yesterday evening, following their participation in a two-phase training programme in New Delhi.

“We need to look at our relationship with mutual sensitivity -- sensitivity to each other’s interests, each other’s concerns, and aspirations,” said the high commissioner.

The high commissioner said they have a strong stake in each other’s

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Politicisation hindering public admin

Speakers tell CGS event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicisation remains the biggest challenge to Bangladesh’s public administration, with both politicians and bureaucrats contributing to its entrenchment, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They criticised the isolation of public administration from the people and called for sweeping reforms to ensure accountability and merit-based appointments.

The public administration system is heavily influenced by a “broker culture”, undermining its effectiveness, speakers said at the discussion, organised by the Centre for Governance Studies at the CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, former advisor to a caretaker government, said, “Our public administration suffers from significant deficiencies and is trapped in a broker system.”

Criticising the state of local governance, he added, “Political parties and bureaucrats have reduced local governments to low-class servants.”

He said without granting autonomy to institutions, economic progress would remain stagnant.

“Bangladesh is experiencing instability and uncertainty, but also an opportunity to bring about change,” said Zillur, also executive director of CGS.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, head of the Election Reform Commission, linked the current state of public administration to its colonial legacy.

“The administration was a tool of

governance and exploitation for the British, and we still see its legacy. It was meant to serve the people but has failed to achieve that goal,” he said.

Dr Muhammad Abdul Mazid, former Secretary and Chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), urged political parties to include reform commitments in their election manifestos.

**Political parties and bureaucrats have reduced local governments to low-class servants. Without granting autonomy to institutions, economic progress would remain stagnant.**

HOSSAIN ZILLUR RAHMAN

“National institutions must not be politicised. The persistence of a brokerage culture undermines accountability,” he said.

Former Secretary AKM Abdul Awal Majumdar traced the roots of administrative decay to the post-independence period.

Former FBCCI President Mir Nasir Hossain highlighted the lack of inter-ministerial coordination and emphasised the importance of holding corrupt individuals accountable.

Advocate Subrata Chowdhury,

general secretary of Gono Forum, cautioned against wasting time under the guise of reform efforts.

Student representative Tahmid Al Mudassir criticised the servility and pettiness of officials in public administration, particularly within the secretariat.

Maj Gen (ret’d) ALIM Fazlur Rahman, former director general of Bangladesh Rifles, proposed forming an all-party government for five years to implement reforms before the next national elections.

The discussion also included remarks from Ibrahim Khan, former Secretary and general secretary of the Officers’ Club, and Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury, former mayor of Chattogram City Corporation and a former lawmaker. They called for institutional reforms.

Other speakers included Dr Jamal Uddin Ahmed, former general secretary of the Bangladesh Economic Association, Mujibur Rahman Manju, member secretary of the Amar Bangladesh Party, former secretary Sultana Afroz, and major general (ret’d) AMSA Amin, an organiser of Ethical Society Bangladesh. Monira Khan, chair of CGS, and Abdullah Hil Rakib, former BGMEA vice president, stressed the importance of ethical governance.

Dhaka University’s Public Administration expert Dr Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, NDM Chairman Bobby Hajjaj, and senior assistant editor of Daily Jugantor Mahbub Kamal also shared their perspectives.

Edn cadre exclusion proposal rejected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BCS General Education Cadre Association yesterday demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Public Administration Reform Commission’s reported recommendation to exclude the General Education Cadre from the BCS system.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday, the association warned of protests if their demands were not met by December 29.

Acting General Secretary Mohammad Tajib Uddin presented a 15-point demand, expressing concern over remarks by the commission’s chairman suggesting plans to remove the General Education and Health Cadres from the BCS structure.

Tajib Uddin said the proposal had caused significant distress among the 16,000 members of the General Education Cadre, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety.

He described the proposed reforms as a “suicidal plan,” warning that such a move would destabilise the cadre and risk the stability of the state.

The demands include halting any efforts to exclude the cadre, ensuring

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Proper trial of Hasina depends on repatriation

Says ICT chief prosecutor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fair trial of Sheikh Hasina would be possible if the government succeeded in bringing her back from India, Chief Prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal Muhammad Tajul Islam said yesterday.

Addressing a question about the government’s diplomatic note to India seeking the return of the ousted prime minister, Tajul Islam said, “The state is doing its duty, and so am I, as part of a state organisation.

If Hasina is brought back, her trial can proceed effectively.”

The ICT also issued arrest warrants yesterday against former Dhaka-19 MP Muhammad Saiful Islam and four police officials in connection with crimes against humanity during the July-August mass uprising in Ashulia, Savar.

Tajul said investigations had uncovered the involvement of Saiful and the police in a brutal incident where six students were reportedly shot dead, their bodies burned, and the crime staged to appear as the work of protesters.

A viral video from early August showed six burnt bodies piled onto a police van. Investigators found that Saiful allegedly fired shots personally, aided by four officers. After the shootings, the bodies were taken in a rickshaw, later loaded onto a van near the police station, and set alight using petrol.

The names of the implicated police officials remain undisclosed to prevent their escape. Tajul Islam said that while the officers are currently posted in different locations, their arrests are expected soon.

“Such actions appear to have been an attempt to avoid accountability,” he added.

**The state is doing its duty, and so am I, as part of a state organisation. If Hasina is brought back, her trial can proceed effectively**

IJTEMA CLASH  
Zubair faction announces indefinite sit-in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A faction of the Tablighi Jamaat loyal to Maulana Zubair Ahmad has announced an indefinite sit-in starting tomorrow morning in Kakrail, demanding a state ban on Maulana Saad Kandhalvi and his followers.

Identifying themselves as “Shura-e-Nizam,” the Zubair faction declared that no activities by the Saad faction would be allowed at the Tongi World Ijtema ground or the Tablighi Jamaat’s Kakrail Mosque.

At a press conference held at the Kakrail Mosque yesterday, Kefaetullah Azhari, principal of Jamiyatul Manhalul Qawmiya Madrasa, read a statement calling for a state ban on the Saad faction. He demanded the arrest of those allegedly involved in the December 17 attack

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Postgrad trainee doctors reject Tk 5,000 stipend raise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Postgraduate trainee doctors yesterday staged a protest rally rejecting the Tk 5,000 increase in their monthly stipend.

The proposed raise would take their stipend to Tk 30,000, but they called for raising the stipend to Tk 50,000, warning that they will continue their movement until their demands are met.

The Finance Division on Monday issued a circular increasing the salary to Tk 30,000 from Tk 25,000 for the postgraduate trainee doctors.

Yesterday afternoon, the postgraduate trainee doctors organised a protest rally at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) in Dhaka’s Shahbagh. Hundreds of doctors participated in the protest, voicing their dissatisfaction with the Tk 5,000 raise.

At around 2:45pm, the protesting doctors brought out the rally at BSMMU, chanting different slogans saying that they rejected the government’s decision.

Regarding the decision, Suja Uddin, a postgraduate trainee doctor at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, told The Daily Star, “A mere Tk 5,000 increase in stipend is a mockery of us. We do not accept this decision. Our monthly stipend must be raised to Tk 50,000.”

While briefing the reporters, Jabir Hossain, president of Doctors Movement for Justice -- the platform under whose banner these protests are being organised -- announced an indefinite period of work abstention nationwide, demanding their monthly stipend be raised to Tk 50,000 or be the same as a 9th-grade salary for government employees.



Pedestrians cross a busy road near the Uttara flyover in Dhaka, ignoring a footbridge just a few yards away. This not only endangers their lives but also puts others in danger. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN