

REFUGEE REHAB Yunus for transparency in Khurushkul project

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has emphasised the need for a transparent listing process, proper distribution of responsibilities, and accountability regarding the Khurushkul Climate Refugee Rehabilitation Project.

He visited the project area in Cox's Bazar yesterday to assess its progress.

Prof Yunus said, "It must be ensured that those who are supposed to be rehabilitated are actually moving into the houses. We need to carefully monitor whether anyone else is occupying them unlawfully, bypassing regulations. Constructing buildings is just a matter of funding, but if we fail to achieve the intended

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Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday held a rally in front of the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital. They pointed to the recent rise in incidents of rape and gender-based violence throughout the country, particularly the incidents of children being raped. Speakers at the protest demanded that the interim government take immediate action to bring this situation under control. Afterwards, they marched towards the Jatiya Press Club, before ending it at their Shegunbagicha office.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Former DU VC Arefin Siddique laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former vice chancellor of Dhaka University, was laid to eternal rest at the Azimpur graveyard in the capital yesterday afternoon.

He was buried next to his parents' graves following a namaz-e-janaza at Dhanmondi Eidgah Mosque after Juma prayers.

The janaza was attended by his family members, DU teachers, his students, and a large number of admirers and well-wishers.

Earlier, his first namaz-e-janaza was held in front of Baitul Aksa Jame Mosque, near his residence on Green Road in the capital. DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan was present at the janaza.

Speaking to reporters after the janaza, Prof Niaz said the janaza was held as per the decision of the family members, in consultation with the university authorities.

He added that the university authorities showed the respect to Prof Siddique that he deserved as a former VC of Dhaka University.

Saifullah Siddique, brother of Prof Arefin Siddique, told The Daily Star that they had learned from the media on Thursday night that it would be difficult for Dhaka University authorities to provide security for the janaza on the university campus.

Therefore, to avoid any unexpected incidents, they decided not to hold the funeral prayers on campus, he added.

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Workers' migration drops by 36pc in February

Says BMET monthly data

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The migration of Bangladeshi workers abroad for jobs declined by 36 percent last month compared to the previous month, with a sharp fall in migration to top destination Saudi Arabia, according to the latest data from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET).

BMET's "Monthly Overseas Employment" data, recently published on its website, shows that 62,436 workers migrated abroad in February, down from 97,867 in January. This brings the total overseas employment for the first two months of this year to 1,60,303.

Last year, 10.11 lakh workers migrated abroad for jobs. Of them, 1,62,158 left in the first two months, including 74,306 in February.

Ali Haider Chowdhury, secretary general of the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), attributed last month's decline to several factors.

He said Saudi Arabia is currently the only large market open to Bangladeshi migrant workers, but job demand from the Gulf nation, including for female workers, has recently decreased.

Additionally, the Bangladesh government has tightened the attestation process for workers' documents required for Saudi Arabia, which has also impacted overall migration, he said.

Speaking to this newspaper recently, the Baira leader urged the government to handle issues related to the Saudi job market carefully, warning that

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Rohingya crisis at risk of being forgotten

Warn INGOs, demand bold, decisive actions for sustainable solutions

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

International NGOs operating in Bangladesh have made an urgent call for bold and decisive global action to secure a sustainable future for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

"The world cannot afford to let one of the largest refugee crises of our time fade from global attention. It is time to secure a sustainable future where Rohingya refugees and host communities are not left in limbo, but empowered to reclaim their rights and dignity," they said in a joint statement yesterday.

The international NGOs – ACF, ActionAid, Cordaid, Concern Worldwide, DRC, Handicap International, International Rescue Committee, Islamic Relief, Oxfam, Plan International, Save the Children, and World Vision – made the statement. The statement comes during UN Secretary-General António Guterres' visit to Bangladesh, hoping to help bring back global attention on the issue.

"With the humanitarian response to the Rohingya crisis facing severe funding shortages and shifting global priorities, the need for renewed and sustained international commitment has never been more urgent," the statement says.

They called for immediate and coordinated action to sustain life-saving assistance, innovative response strategies, and a dedicated mission that ensures stability and dignity for over one million Rohingya refugees and host

communities in Cox's Bazar.

Severe funding cuts have slashed rations by over half, which will be operational from April, worsening economic pressures and social tensions in host communities. Essential services – including food and nutrition, WASH, protection, shelter, and livelihoods – are critically affected.

"Without urgent reforms and a long-term strategy, this crisis risks becoming unsustainable and deeply entrenched. Now in its eighth year, the Rohingya crisis continues to strain Bangladesh's resources as donor commitments dwindle amid global crises," the statement added.

Signatories of the statement said addressing this crisis requires a high-level and regular dialogue among the UN, Bangladesh government, development partners, INGOs, local NGOs, and key international stakeholders.

"The current model of aid must evolve into a more sustainable, long-term, and resilience-based approach, integrating livelihoods, skills training, and economic opportunities for both Rohingya refugees and host communities," they added.

A Triple Nexus Approach, linking humanitarian relief, development, and peacebuilding, is crucial to reducing dependency and fostering self-reliance, they also said.

"The Rohingya crisis is not just a resource

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The Rohingya crisis is not just a resource crisis, but a crisis of political will. The UN and international community must ensure sustained support and invest in long-term solutions.

HASINA RAHMAN
Country director,
International Rescue
Committee

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CHILDREN

Set up 200 more speedy trial tribunals Demand lower court judges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Judicial Service Association (BJSJA), an organisation of lower court judges, has urged the authorities to immediately establish at least 200 more Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals to ensure the speedy trial of cases related to violence, torture, and oppression against women and children across the country.

At the same time, BJSJA also called for the formation of separate Children's Courts and Human Trafficking Crime Prevention Tribunals. It suggested removing the additional responsibilities of these tribunals from the existing Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals.

BJSJA President Md Amirul Islam and Secretary General Muhammad Mazharul Islam made the demand in a statement issued on Thursday.

"There are only 101 Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals handling 1,51,317 pending cases nationwide. On average, each tribunal has about 1,500 pending cases," the statement said.

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JULY UPRISING Student leaders first reached out to Yunus on Aug 1

Asif Mahmud's book reveals the inside stories

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Protesting students began reaching out to Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus as early as August 1, 2024, through his colleagues, at the peak of the mass uprising against the ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

A new book titled July: Matribhumi Othoba Mrityu, written by LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud, provides fresh insights into these crucial days. Published by Prothoma Prokashan, the book is set to be officially launched today.

According to the book, two key leaders of the student-led mass uprising, Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud, made two phone calls to Yunus on August 5, the day Hasina fled the country. They had lengthy discussions with him regarding the next steps for the country's leadership.

"I didn't know how to congratulate Nahid and Asif. These young men have completely mesmerised me," Yunus, now the Chief Adviser, wrote in the foreword of the book.

"I found no reason to remain steadfast in my previous decision. I thought, on the other end of the phone, across thousands of miles, these young people had sacrificed their lives to free the country from tyranny, and they have succeeded in making it free from autocracy. At this moment,

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Prof Yunus was cautious that he would not take charge of a government that resembled the 'One-Eleven' situation. The government would have to run according to his vision.

Traffic chaos at JnU gate puts students at risk

RAKIB MADBBER

Jagannath University (JnU) students are facing severe traffic congestion while entering the campus due to an unauthorised bus and rickshaw stop on the road in front of the institution's main gate in Old Dhaka.

In the absence of a designated bus stand nearby, buses from various companies pick up and drop off passengers in front of the gate and surrounding areas, turning the space into a transport hub. Rickshaws and motorbikes also park haphazardly, worsening the congestion.

The bottleneck not only causes delays for students but also poses risks to both pedestrians and commuters.

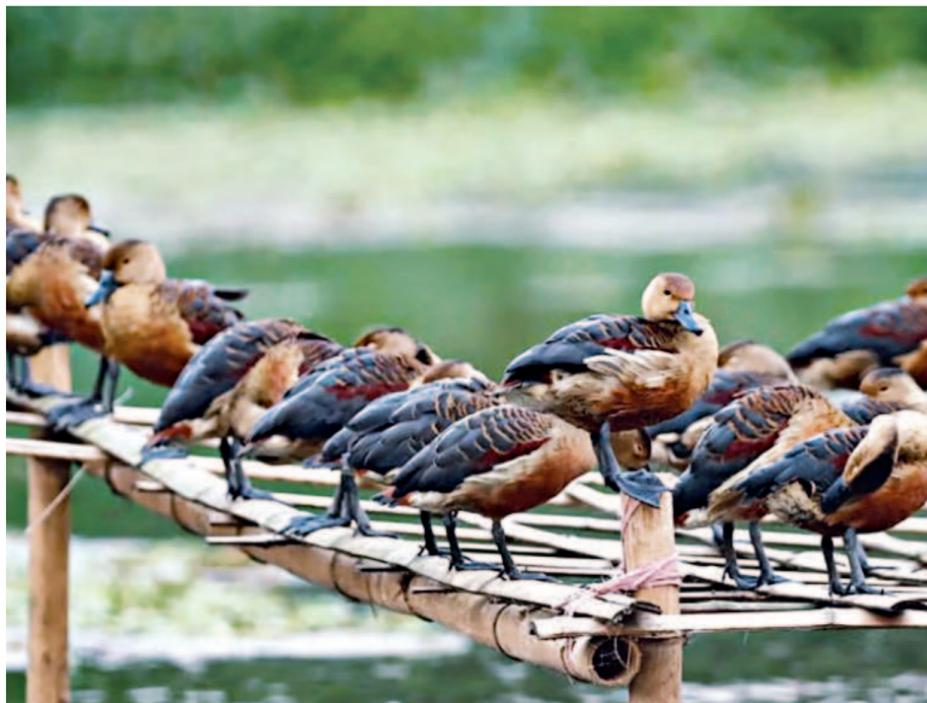


The incessant honking and shouting of bus staffers create extreme noise pollution, disrupting the academic environment. Students allege that reckless driving and sudden manoeuvres lead to frequent accidents.

"It's a complete traffic nuisance. The bus drivers are completely ignorant of the fact that this is the main gate of a university. We endure a chaotic situation every day, but no one takes measures to solve it," said Jakir Hossain, a student of the Islamic History and Culture department.

"Sometimes we don't even get enough space to walk. We have complained to the authorities many times, but

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Spring has brought a delightful surprise to Jahangirnagar University -- hundreds of Lesser Whistling Ducks have returned to the Transport Lake after years of early departures. Thanks to an ecological restoration project that replenished their crucial food source, the lake is once again teeming with these migratory birds.

PHOTO: AURITRO SATTAR

REVIVAL OF HABITAT Lesser Whistling Duck population increases at JU

SAKIB AHMED

Winter has passed, and spring is in full bloom at Jahangirnagar University. However, the real surprise isn't the blooming flowers, but the return of hundreds of Lesser Whistling Ducks to the lake. After six years of early departures, with empty waters by late February, these migratory birds have finally made a comeback.

Traditionally, Lesser Whistling Ducks migrate to the "Transport Lake", located next to the transport yard in JU, from both abroad and various regions of the country, staying throughout the winter. However, in recent years, their numbers have been declining. Over the past six winters, many left earlier than usual, often by mid-February. This winter, an even more alarming trend emerged – while these migratory birds were first spotted at the lake next to the Al-Beruni Extension Hall on November 9, 2024, many disappeared as early as December. Transport Lake, once a thriving habitat, was nearly devoid of them.

"Waste accumulation and the disappearance of duckweed, a crucial food source for the birds, are the two

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