



UN must continue evolving for global peace

Says Prof Yunus

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the United Nations, which celebrated its 80th anniversary yesterday, must continue to evolve and adapt if it is to fulfill their collective aspiration for peace and multilateralism.

"We join the call for reforming the UN to make it more agile, integrated, and equipped to deliver the aspirations of all people in an evolving global

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NCP won't be a 'pet' opposition

Says Sarjis Alam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizens Party aims to either form the government or play the role of a strong opposition, said Sarjis Alam, the party's chief organiser for the northern region, yesterday.

He also said the NCP does not want to be a "pet" opposition like the Jatiya Party.

He made the remark at a coordination meeting of the NCP held at the Shaheed Abu Sayeed International Convention Centre in the capital's Shahbagh area.

The meeting was organised by the party's Dhaka city (north and south) and Dhaka district units.

"NCP did not emerge to become the 46th political party in Bangladesh. We will either represent the people as the ruling party in parliament or become a strong opposition. We are not here to be a pet opposition like the Jatiya Party," said Sarjis.

Sarjis said the party will start announcing convening committees for its district and city units from today. He expressed hope that the convening committees for Dhaka north and south city units would be finalised within three days.

"All district and city convening committees must be formed by

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People risk their lives crossing the main road through gaps in a divider in the Mirpur 2 area of the capital, ignoring the footbridge located right above them. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DENGUE SURGE

Mitford hospital stretched to the limit

HELEMUL ALAM

It was around 1:00pm on Thursday when this correspondent entered one of the medicine wards at Mitford hospital in Old Dhaka. Just at the entrance, two women were found wailing -- they had just lost a loved one to dengue.

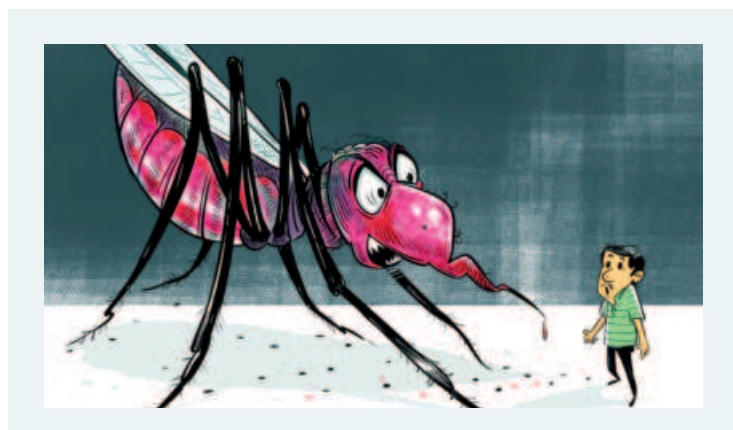
The body of Ibrahim, 50, lay on a bed placed on the floor. His daughter-in-law Rachona Akhtar sat silently beside him, her eyes swollen with tears, while her husband and relatives completed the formalities to take the body home to Keraniganj for burial.

"We never imagined this would happen," Rachona said in a trembling voice. "He had fever for three days, but we thought it was nothing serious. We gave him medicine from a local pharmacy."

Ibrahim, who supported his family by selling pickles, was brought to the hospital on Wednesday night when he began struggling to breathe. Despite being admitted at 9:00pm, he passed away 16 hours later.

"We didn't even know it was dengue until yesterday," Rachona said quietly.

Dr Ripon Biswas, medical officer at Mitford hospital, said Ibrahim arrived in critical condition with septicemia -- an infection that had spread throughout his body -- along with hepatitis and fluid accumulation in his lungs and abdomen.



MITFORD

All 10 ICU beds occupied, patients treated on floor

Hospital aims to increase ICU capacity to 30 beds

15 dengue deaths, 1,223 cases recorded so far

DENGUE SITUATION

259 deaths reported so far

Most fatalities linked to late hospitalisation, comorbidities

Multiple viruses circulating, delaying dengue diagnosis

"We tried to move him to the ICU," Dr Biswas said, "but there were no available beds. Our ICU has only 10 beds, and they are always full."

Since September, Mitford hospital has been facing overwhelming pressure from

dengue patients, many in severe condition. On Wednesday alone, 20 new dengue patients were admitted to a ward designed for just six beds.

"We never turn away a critical patient," Dr Biswas added. "When no beds are available, we treat

them on the floor. Our doctors and nurses do their best, even when ICU support is needed but unavailable."

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, at least 259 dengue patients died while 63,170 others were hospitalised as of Thursday. Among the deaths and cases, 1,223 and 15 respectively were reported at Mitford hospital.

During a visit to the ward, this correspondent found several patients lying on mats and beds placed along the floor.

Among them was Yunus Mallik, 85, from the Mitford area, who had been receiving treatment since Wednesday. His grandson, Robiul Islam, said they came to Dhaka from Bagerhat for another medical issue, only for Yunus to be diagnosed with dengue after days of fever.

"Doctors said many dengue patients need ICU care, but there just aren't enough beds," Robiul said.

Another patient, Abdur Rahman from Keraniganj, was admitted the previous day with nausea and fever. "They said it is dengue," he said weakly. "I am lucky to have found a bed."

Dr Md Mofizur Rahman Mollah, assistant director (finance and store) at Mitford hospital, said the facility currently has 10 ICU beds and five paediatric ICU (PICU) beds.

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'Ahmad Rafique was a social revolutionary'

Speakers recall Language Movement veteran's lifelong struggle for equality, social change

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although Language Movement veteran Ahmad Rafique could not practise as a doctor after completing his medical degree, he chose instead to become a "doctor of society," dedicating his life to bringing social change, said speakers at a memorial meeting yesterday.

They described him as a "social revolutionary" who rejected the idea of private property and spent his life opposing liberalism and striving to build an egalitarian society.

Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury presided over the meeting at the Abdul Karim Sahityabisharad Auditorium of Bangla Academy. He was the convener of the National Committee for the Condolence Meeting, which organised the programme.

Serajul Islam said Ahmad Rafique was a true Language Movement veteran in two senses -- by being part of that historic movement and later by enriching the Bangla language through his research and writings.

"He fought to establish the language and later continued his cultural fight," he said, adding that the Language Movement was not only about

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SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY

establishing a state language but also had an appeal for social reform.

Ahmad Rafique realised that appeal and joined the East Pakistan Communist Party, he said, adding that Rafique believed a revolution would not happen without cultural preparation.

As a result, Rafique started his cultural struggle, wrote poems, published essays on literature, arts and culture, translated medical terms into Bangla, and conducted intensive research on Rabindranath Tagore.

"He couldn't continue his medical profession as the authorities denied him enrolment as an intern, but he tried to treat the whole society as his patient," Choudhury said, urging people to work for establishing a discrimination-free society to pay tribute to Ahmad Rafique.

Mujahidul Islam Selim, presidium member of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, said although Ahmad Rafique left the party, he always upheld socialist thoughts and worked for the betterment of humankind.

"I learned his name first during the Liberation War from Ila Mitra [a veteran Indian communist leader] who spoke to Ahmad Rafique several times. Later when I met him, a wave of warmth swept through my heart at his gentle, smiling expression."

Ahmad Rafique was a straightforward person who expressed his emotions without hesitation.

Bangladesh Jasad leader Dr Mushtaq Hossain said Ahmad Rafique's life should be documented as he was one of the idols for every idealistic politician.

Cultural activist Mofizur Rahman Laltu said recitation artists found their voices in the poems of Ahmad Rafique's book Biplop Ferari Tobu (A Revolutionary, Still a Fugitive). "It's an inspiring book which is still relevant, and it inspired us even during the anti-fascism movement in recent years," he said.

The programme began with songs of Rabindranath Tagore, performed by artist Ashim Dutta. The audience paid tribute with flowers to Ahmad Rafique's portrait and observed a one-minute silence.

Ahmad Rafique passed away at Dhaka's Birdem Hospital on October 2 at the age of 96.

'Will build a united country with the inclusion of all'

Says Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said if his party comes to power, it will make sincere efforts to address the problems of all indigenous groups.

He particularly reassured the Garo community while addressing the Dhaka Wangala Festival 2025, organised by the community on the Banani Bidyaniketan School and College premises in the capital.

Fakhrul said BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman made it very clear in the 31-point reform agenda announced in 2022 that the party would work to build a "rainbow nation" in Bangladesh -- one that will be formed with the inclusion of all communities.

"Our responsibility is to integrate all communities to some extent with the mainstream of society, to improve their economic condition, and at the same time to preserve and promote their cultures and heritages..."

Wangala, the "Hundred Drums Festival," is a post-harvest celebration of the Garo community.

The BNP leader said he had the opportunity to develop close relations with various indigenous communities over the past several months and had also attended their gatherings in Mymensingh.

Fakhrul urged members of the indigenous communities to rise as proud citizens of Bangladesh. "You have to stand tall as Bangladeshi citizens," he said.



STAR REPORT

Bangladeshi architect Mohammed Rezwan's solar-powered floating schools have received the Unesco Confucius Prize for Literacy 2025, one of the world's highest honours for advancing education and lifelong learning.

The Chinese government sponsors this award, said a press release.

Among hundreds of nominations worldwide, Unesco selected three winners: Bangladesh's Shidhulai Floating Schools, Ireland's Learn



with NALA eLearning, and Morocco's Second Chance School and Inclusive Education Program.

The 20th award ceremony was held on September 27 in Qufu, Shandong Province, China, the birthplace of Confucius.

Rezwan accepted the trophy and certificate on behalf of his organisation, Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha, which launched the world's first floating

school in 2002. Growing up in Chalanbeel, he saw how annual floods forced schools to close for months.

His simple yet transformative solution was to take schools to the water. Today, solar-powered boats serve as classrooms, libraries, and training centres that keep learning alive even when villages are submerged.

Unesco praised the initiative for "delivering literacy education



PHOTO: COLLECTED

to marginalised learners in flood-prone regions through locally rooted innovation." The Shidhulai floating school programme has now been replicated across Bangladesh by other NGOs and inspired similar projects throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The Bangladesh government has incorporated Rezwan's floating

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Rezwan's floating school wins Unesco Confucius prize