

A conspiracy to undo democracy: DUCSU leaders

By DU Correspondent

Leaders of Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) Saturday expressed concern at the situation created by the government employees over the new pay scale and called upon them to join work for greater national interest.

In a statement they said the new democratic government offered the enhanced pay package despite a tight budgetary situation while one and a half crore people were unemployed and caution efforts were on to restore the ruined economy.

It was a 'political conspiracy' by some vested quarters to nip the fledgling democracy by 'holding hostage' the government employees and creating an 'anarchic' situation. The 12 crore people were in turn held hostage by this, DUCSU Vice-President Amanullah Aman and General Secretary Khairul Kabir Khokon said.

UNB Adds: In a similar statement, Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangatha (JASAS) President Khurshid

All and General Secretary Zahid Hossain Chunnun expressed grave concern over the 'stalemate in the administration created by a section of the employees'.

They termed the action by some government employees "a heinous plot" to hamper the democratic atmosphere and called upon all employees to return to their duties for greater interest of the nation and the country.

Communist Party papers fail to appear in Moscow

MOSCOW, Aug 24: Soviet Communist Party newspapers failed to appear here today, while journalists working at the official news agency Tass appealed for it to become an 'unbiased' news organization dedicated to freedom and democracy, reports AFP.

Pravda, the three-million circulation Communist Party organ, was banned for the first time in the history of the Soviet state.

WB seeks clarification

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Sources said that the IMF even indicated that the Policy Framework Paper (PFP), the guideline of current fiscal year's reforms package agreed with the Fund, might not be presented to IMF board.

The PFP, which was formulated in last May, is scheduled to be presented to the IMF board in Washington on Aug 30 for approval.

The possible postponement of PFP approval has made uncertain the release of US dollar 200 million in 1991-92 from the IMF under its on-going Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) programme, apprehends Finance Secretary Khorshed Alam.

He also expressed caution that if PFP gets stuck up, the entire aid-package from the donors will most likely be hampered.

The World Bank and the IMF, according to sources, expressed concern that the government pay hike will also affect the private sector.

Loss of public sector corporations will increase further

and the country's competitiveness in the export market will decline, the multilateral lending agencies warned.

Sources said that the agencies implicitly indicated to raise taxes to ensure that development budget would in no way be affected by the additional expenditure to meet the pay hike.

The government would send a letter today (Sunday) to the IMF and the World Bank headquarters in Washington justifying its stance on raising wages for the public servants.

Sources said the Bangladesh's Alternate Executive Director to the World Bank had also been asked to discuss the matter with the two multilateral lending agencies so that PFP can be set through as per schedule.

The Finance Secretary however told UNB that the government would make pledge to the multilateral funding agencies that current expenditures would be kept within the budgetary projections.

Three killed as truck rams coaster at Dharmapur

By Staff Correspondent

Three persons were killed and another six injured when a truck collided head-on with a coaster at Dharmapur on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway under Choudhagram upazila in Comilla early Saturday morning, according to information received in Dhaka.

Comilla district administration officials, when contacted over telephone, said that the accident when the Chittagong-bound truck ramed into the Dhaka bound coaster coming from Sonagazi.

Two persons died on the spot while another person succumbed to the injuries on way to the Comilla General Hospital.

The victims of the accident were identified as Abdul Mannan (30) and Zahurul Huq (22) while the third victim could not be identified. Six persons were taken to the Comilla Hospital, where four were released after first aid.

Farm production

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apart from floods and drought, cyclone, hailstorm, tidal bore and salinity hampered agricultural production on 30 lakh hectares of land. She said the loss in the agricultural production was increasing with the increase of attack by pests and diseases. She said the 28 lakh hectares of land in the southern region of the country experienced pest attack for almost round the year.

The Prime Minister said the most devastating cyclone of the recent memory on April 29 destroyed crops on 18 lakh hectares of land.

She said, with the present rate of growth the population of the country would stand at 15 crore by the year 2000. The economy of Bangladesh is mainly based on agriculture and the present size of total cultivable land is 81.60 lakh hectares, she said adding it was imperative to produce additional foodgrains to provide food to this vast population. She underscored the need for beefing up the improved agricultural programme for increasing production in the sector.

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Customers demonstrate against work stoppage by postal workers inside the General Post Office Saturday. — Star photo

Secretariat clash

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central transport pool so that no car can go out on official duty.

The government on the other hand, has hardened its position on the issue and is contemplating facing the employees politically.

According to eye witnesses, the striking employees gathered Saturday morning inside the Secretariat and started a meeting. They strongly protested Friday's government press note.

The trouble started when police attempted to disperse the rally and picked up some people from there. Many of the striking employees formed human barricades to obstruct the movement of police vehicles.

At this stage police resorted to lathicharge and lobbed teargas shells to disperse the agitating employees in the Secretariat premises. About a 100 people were injured during the police action, the employees claim.

Among the injured persons

three were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. They were, Khan Majlis (28), Feroz Ahmed (50) and Tazimul Islam (29), all employees of different ministries.

Police sources said that seven policemen were injured during the agitation. Among them one constable was admitted to the Police Hospital while the other's received first aid.

Police action began at around 9 am when employees were agitating in support of their demand for a pay rise and the refixation of office timings.

According to their fresh programme of movement, employees in the Secretariat signed the attendance register in the morning and gathered in the premises between building Number 6 and 7.

Police tried to disperse the demonstrators and at one stage some employees were picked up by a police truck.

The angry demonstrators surrounded the truck and

demanding release of their colleagues.

Police resorted to lathicharge on the agitators and tried to move the truck, but failed. At about 9.50 police lobbed about ten teargas shells. Witnesses said that three rubber bullets were also fired.

Employees alleged that shots were fired at them, but police denied the allegation.

After the teargas charge, the police truck moved out of the Secretariat with the held demonstrators in it.

The employees of the secretariat brought out a procession and gathered in front of the National Press Club where the hike a rally.

Syed Mohiuddin and other leaders of the employees addressed the rally and demanded immediate release of the arrested persons.

The employees held by police were later released.

Government employees from different offices in the city joined the rally and a big procession paraded the streets protesting the police action.

472 examinees, one teacher expelled under Comilla Board

From Our Correspondent

COMILLA, Aug 24: At least 472 examinees and one teacher were expelled for adopting unfair means in the S.S.C examinations in 49 centers under Comilla Board on the second day today.

Examinations on mathematics were held today.

The highest expulsion of 273 was in Comilla district followed by Bandarban - 9, Noakhali - 7, Lakshmipur - 34, Chandpur - 14, Brahmanbaria - 11, Maulvibazar - 5, Habiganj - 10 and Sunamganj - 9.

Our DU correspondent adds: All the eight examinees, two under Dhaka and six under Rajshahi boards appeared at Saturday's Islamic History and culture examinations, held peacefully.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia delivering the inaugural address at the four-day workshop on "risk management in agricultural production in Bangladesh" at the International Conference Centre Saturday. — PID photo

Gorbachev quits as party chief

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ted by the official Soviet news agency Tass, said he was acting "with the goal of preventing the unlawful destruction" of the records.

Communist Party documents should be transferred to the Russian government, including those kept in central party archives in Moscow.

On Friday, buildings of the Communist Party Central Committee were sealed in Moscow, and the Russian republic. Also sealed were party archives and documents in Leningrad's Smolny Institute — Lenin's headquarters during the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

Yeltsin, who led resistance to last Monday's abortive rightwing coup, formally recognised the independence of Estonia and Latvia, two of the three separatist Baltic republics.

Lat Vian leader Anatolij Gorbunov told reporters Yeltsin signed a decree on Latvia at a meeting in the Russian Parliament while Tass news agency published a second decree on Estonia.

Gorbachev, battling to restore his authority, earlier told thousands of people mourning the three victims of the attempted coup that the rightwing communists who briefly seized power could not be forgiven.

Yeltsin, now the pretender to many of Gorbachev's powers, bade an emotional farewell to "our heroes, our protectors, our saviours".

Hundreds of thousands of people carrying white-blue-red Russian national flags, flowers and black-bordered portraits gathered for the funeral cere-

monies at the foot of the red-brick Kremlin walls.

The Communist Party has been under siege since the coup collapsed, banned in republic after republic, its buildings and newspapers seized, its bank accounts frozen, statues of its heroes demolished, and its senior members hamorrhaging away.

Yeltsin's supporters, who say the 15-million-member party was squarely behind the coup, are urging Gorbachev to recognise its guilt and crush it.

But after his return from captivity on Thursday, the 60-year-old Kremlin chief was still insisting that the party could be salvaged as a vehicle for reform by purging the hardliners.

The Justice Ministry ordered the seizure of party documents on Friday to establish if it was guilty, and Yeltsin's supporters say they intercepted papers being smuggled out of the now-closed Central Committee headquarters.

The little Baltic republics and three other small republics — Moldova, Georgia and Armenia — have been seeking to restore their pre-war independence for more than 18 months.

But none of these can be compared to the Ukraine, grain basket of the Soviet Union and second only in influence to Yeltsin's Russian federation in economic power and significance.

Today's Supreme Soviet (parliament) vote in Kiev puts the entire future of the Soviet Union as a single state in doubt.

"In view of the deadly threat

posed to our country on the night of August 18-19 (the night of the coup) ... and expressing a thousand-year-old tradition of statehood, the Supreme Soviet solemnly proclaims the independence of the Ukraine," it said.

The vote, approved by 346 of the total of 450 Deputies present, called a referendum for December 1 to "to confirm the act of independence", but said the Ukraine was an independent state from the moment of proclamation.

The drive for independence was sparked off by the destruction of the conservative nucleus which had blocked independence and opposed devotion from within the Kremlin.

Almost every leading right-winger in Soviet politics has been disgraced or discredited for giving the coup support, or hesitating to condemn it.

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Ukraine

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Party, the unofficial Interfax news agency reported here.

He held a special session of the republic's parliament, convened to discuss the failed coup attempt against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, that he had sent his resignation earlier Saturday to the Central Committee, but that he would remain a party member.

The President also said that the local offices of the party, the KGB and Interior Ministry would be sealed if it emerged that the organizations has destroyed archive documents during the three-day coup.

Police action

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concern at what she said an "unfortunate attack" inside the secretariat on the government employees engaged in a movement demanding a new pay commission in keeping with the existing market price.

Eighteen leaders of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parisad (SKOP) in a joint statement condemned the police action on the peaceful movement and called for a negotiated settlement of the situation. They said demands of the government employees were reasonable.

Signatories to the statement included: Abdus Salam Khan, Iskander Ali, Mokhesur Rahman, Abdullah Sarkar, and Nasim Ali.

The Central Secretariat of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) in a statement expressed concern at the 'complex' situation being created over the issues. The CPB called upon the government to shun coercive policy and settle the matter through negotiation.

Jatiya Gonotantrik Party President Shaful Alam Prodan, in a statement said the issue should be solved peacefully keeping national interest high.

Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar and M A Gafur, President and General Secretary respectively of Jatiya Sramik Party condemned the police action and urged the government to solve the problem through negotiation.

M A Hannan, convener of Muslim League, in a statement condemned use of tear gas and lathi charge by police on government employees and called upon the government to remove 'unusual disparity' in pay scale.

The Midnight File

10 more killed in Croatia

BELOGRADE, Aug 24: Escalating ethnic fighting in Croatia claimed 10 more lives Saturday and the republic conceded the loss of much of the strategic region of Baranja to rebel Serbs. Serbian and Croatian church made an appeal for peace and decided to form a joint commission to establish a permanent dialogue between the two largest church communities in Yugoslavia, reports AP.

Thai diplomat held in drug bust

LONDON, Aug 24: Customs officers seized 60 kilos (132 pounds) of heroin Saturday and five men, including a diplomat at the Thai Embassy in London, were arrested. The diplomat, whose name was not released, was arrested after the Prime Minister of Thailand cancelled the envoy's accreditation, and, therefore, his diplomatic immunity, a Customs spokesman said, reports AP.

Mafia gunmen kill mayor

BOVA, Aug 24: Hooded gunmen killed a long-time mayor of this southern Italian town and his brother on Saturday, in an apparent Mafia settling of accounts. The gunmen fired over a wall as Pasquale Foti, 59, his brother Francesco, 56, and eight friends were leaving a farmhouse where they had dinner, said police quoted by the Italian news agency ANSA, reports AP.

Govt clarifies position

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changed the office timing and decided to form a high-powered committee for recommending promotions for the low-paid employees. But, it regretted, a section of employees was disturbing normal activities by resorting to continuous agitation.

It said the Establishment Ministry in a Press Note made a fervent appeal Friday to continue their normal activities. In spite of that, some employees were assembling inside the Secretariat illegally at 9-30 am Saturday defying the Government appeal.

Police on duty requested

them to leave this unlawful assembly and go back to their respective duties. But they aggressively started throwing paperweights, tubelights, dustbins and flower vases at police for which some of its members were injured, the Press Note said.

Police was facing the situation with tolerance and asking the unruly employees through microphones to go back to their duties. The unruly employees paid no heed to the call of police but became more aggressive and continued to assault police personnel, the Press Note said.

In the assault, seven members of police including an Additional Deputy Police Commissioner and two Assistant Police Commissioners were injured. After all attempts to pacify the agitation failed, police exploded seven rounds of tear gas shells at 10-15 am today for self-defense as well as for dispersing the unruly employees, the Press Note said, adding, three employees were injured during tussle with police at that time.

At one stage, 35 unruly employees were arrested with a view to bringing the situation under control, but they were released later on the appeal of the Secretary General of Government Employees Coordination Council Sayed Mahiuddin and on the pledge of good behaviour and return to duties.

Despite this magnanimous attitude of the Government, some employees continued their unruly and illegal activities, the Press Note said.

Owners of the vessels called the strike demanding reduction in the price of diesel to the pre-Gulf war level.

No passenger launch sailed from the IWTA terminal at Sadarghat in the city on Saturday.

Passengers were seen returning home in despair from the terminal.

However, a number of launches that started for Dhaka from other parts of the country prior to the start of the strike arrived at the Sadarghat terminal.

Leaders of the Bangladesh Launch Owners' Association told The Daily Star that no launch, cargo vessel, trawler, barge, tug or private-owned ferry plied on any route in the country. No untoward incident occurred during the strike, they added.

Vote for 'boat'

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for non-passage of the bill. She urged all the members of the Parliament (MPs) to help pass the bill to end politics of killing and coup in the country once for all. "No more head of the state will be murdered in the country if the bill is passed", she viewed.

Earlier, she addressed a number of public gathering at Bhenabari, Tekerhat, and near Sadar bridge.

himself from the Sanghati Parishad.

He said that he was also offered a car and Taka 50,000 every month if he joined the government side.

Syed Mohiuddin demanded of the government to sit at the negotiation table with representatives of the government employees to solve the problems.

He announced that the employees would continue their abstention from work until riot police, BDR and ansars were withdrawn from the Secretariat.

He also announced a protest rally today at 11 am in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

He further said that the employees of the Secretariat would sign the attendance register as usual and meet at the Press Club square everyday at 10 am till their demands were fulfilled.

He further said that the government did not even announce the highest wages at Taka 950 for the lowest grade of employees as was recommended by the pay committee. He demanded minimum wages for the lowest grade at Taka 1200.

Mohiuddin said that of the total amount of money involved in the wage hike Taka 250 crore are involved payment to one lakh high-ranking officers while the other one million employees would get the benefit of Taka 150 crore are only.

He said that employees of the lowest grade whose basic pay is Taka 500 would get an enhanced salary of Taka 275 with the implementation of the new scale.

Govt employees eulogise Ershad

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ployees demanded of the head of government, in an oblique reference to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, to regret yesterday's incidents at the Secretariat and pay compensation of Taka 50,000 to each employee injured during the incidents.

Syed Mohiuddin, Secretary General of the Sanghati Parishad, eulogised deposed President Ershad in the press conference for his contribution to the government employees and said that they got benefits like time-scale, two bonuses during Eid festivals and higher wages during Ershad's rule.

The leaders of the employees unions said that the Pay Commission was constituted during Ershad's rule in 1990 and the pay scale was calculated on the basis of the prices of commodities on August 3, 1990.

Syed Mohiuddin said that he had presented a bouquet of flowers to Ershad and garlanded him because he fulfilled some basic demands of the employees. He said that he was ready to garland anyone who would fulfil their demands.

He blamed Minister MK Anwar and State Minister Tariqul Islam for their attempt to split the government employees union including Syed Atwar Rahman, Sheikh Syedur Rahman, Kazi Abdul Hannan and Bahauddin were bribed by the government to divide the government employees.

Muttalib, President of the Sanghati Parishad, present in the press conference, alleged that Atwar Rahman had offered him Taka 10,000 to dissociate

himself from the Sanghati Parishad.

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