

VC's exit to restore order at DU, says Edn Minister

Triumph of DU students

VC, proctor quit, reopening of university within a week, protest goes on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk yesterday was optimistic that a congenial academic atmosphere would return on Dhaka University (DU) campus now that Anwarullah Chowdhury has resigned from the post of vice-chancellor.

"Anwarullah Chowdhury, vice-chancellor (VC) of Dhaka University tendered his resignation letter this afternoon. We have forwarded the same to the chancellor's office for consideration," Farruk told reporters at a hurriedly called press briefing at his office yesterday afternoon.

Expressing his optimism about the DU VC's resignation, he said this would calm down the university's tense situation and stop the students' fast-into-death programme.

"This ends the reason to agitate," he said.

Chowdhury, who shifted his position frequently following the police atrocities on female students

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Dreadful dozen

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh lost the series in the same old sad fashion when they were bowled out for 184 in the second innings of the second Test against Sri Lanka at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground in Colombo yesterday.

Resuming the fourth day on 103-4, the visitors were dismissed just before the scheduled lunch break to present the Lankans a 2-0 cakewalk in the two-match Test Series.

The home team won the first Test at the P Sara Stadium by an innings and 196 runs. It was Lanka's tenth consecutive victory on home soil and their first win without Muttiah Muralitharan since the off-spinner started his career in 1992.

Bangladesh's 12th defeat in 13 Tests told the old tale of a pathetic defeat. The Test rookies have failed to cross 200-run mark in 11th suc

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University vice-chancellor finally resigned yesterday.

In the face of eight days of unrelenting student riot marked by sporadic police attacks, Vice-chancellor Prof. Anwarullah Chowdhury yesterday stepped down and along with him Proctor Prof. Nazrul Islam.

"It's a triumph for us," chanted euphoric students who were on a hunger strike at the Central Shaheed Minar on hearing the news of the resignation at around 2:00pm. "But we won't call off our programme until all our seven-point demand is met." The students, who later broke their fast, will meet again at 4:00pm today at the Shaheed Minar to announce their fresh programme.

Their other unmet demands include withdrawal of police and BDR forces from the campus within seven days, making the campus free from outsiders, withdrawal of cases against the students arrested during the police attack in the Shamsunnahar Hall, and a stop to harassment on general students by political elements.

Professor Chowdhury goes down the history of the university as the shortest-lived VC who only took office on November 12. He is also the first to go in the face of students' wrath. Pro-Vice-chancellor Prof. Yusuf Haider will now be the acting VC. After taking over, Prof. Haider said the university would reopen within a week and the demands of the students would be met.

The outgoing VC in a statement said, "I have resigned due to the

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PHOTO: STAR

Hunger striking students at the Central Shaheed Minar burst into triumphant slogans upon hearing that Professor Anwarullah Chowdhury has stepped down as the Dhaka University vice-chancellor on the eighth day of relentless agitation on the campus yesterday.

Eating humble pie

NAZMUL ASHRAF

Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof. Anwarullah Chowdhury had to swallow his words about last week's police atrocities on a section of female students of the university and the subsequent protests.

Chowdhury stood down yesterday 'in the interests of general students' although he had earlier called them everything but students.

The VC described the agitating students as conspirators, outsiders, political activists and even garment workers.

Interestingly, the resignation was in total reversal of his earlier resolve that he would not resign unless the charges brought against him were proved true.

In fact, the VC frequently shifted

his position on the midnight police atrocities on students of the Shamsunnahar Hall and the subsequent protests.

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Prof. Anwarullah Chowdhury

Musharraf reaches Sri Lanka

AFP, Colombo

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf arrived in Sri Lanka yesterday.

He was greeted by Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and Foreign Minister Tyrone Fernando.

The Pakistani leader was due to hold talks yesterday with Wickremesinghe and attend a banquet in his honour hosted by Kumaratunga.

Talks were due to focus on economic issues, with the two countries signing a bilateral free trade agreement today.

BSS adds: Earlier in the morning, Musharraf accompanied by his wife Begum Sehba Musharraf, left Dhaka for Colombo ending his three-day state visit to Bangladesh.

They were seen off at the Zia International Airport by acting President Barrister Muhammad Jamiruddin Sircar and Begum Sircar and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

SAARC future depends on Indo-Pak relations

Musharraf tells editors

BSS, Dhaka

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf said here yesterday he saw the threat of India-Pakistan war lurking as long as the capability of adventure remained across the border.

"As long as the capability of adventure remains I will not say the threat does not exist," he said at a 90-minute breakfast meeting with editors, columnists and senior journalists just before leaving Dhaka ending a three-day state visit to Bangladesh.

Asked whether he thought India-Pakistan tension had de-escalated to a level that war was not possible he said, "As a military man I see the threat with the troops remaining stationed eyeball to eyeball."

He said Pakistan and India need to resolve the Kashmir issue to

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PHOTO: STAR

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia sees Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf off at the Zia International Airport yesterday.

Commentary

Dangers of two-thirds majority

MAHFUZ ANAM

It was wise of the government to show the Dhaka University vice-chancellor, Professor Anwarullah Chowdhury, the door. He had lost confidence of the general students and majority of the teachers and there was no way the DU crisis could be resolved without some heads rolling, and his had to be the first. But there must be some others. Given that our political culture is seldom given to admit fault and never to retreat in the face of adverse agitation, the actions of the government show signs of critical self-assessment and an unusual openness to admit error of judgement. These are good signs but not sufficient. For a real change in the situation, they have to be pushed further.

While we await the outcome of the judicial inquiry

(likely to take a while because of the closure of the university), there is one fundamental question that we want to ask. Why a government, having won a massive mandate in a free and fair election and enjoying considerable public support, should allow police to enter a residential hall for the female students at the dead of night, authorise them (our police never move inside the DU without a signal from the top) to beat the students, drag them out of bed, pull them by their hair, abuse them in the filthiest language (readers can easily guess the words used) and finally take a number of them to the police station and file cases against them? It did not stop there. For several following days police attacked agitating students and teachers who came out on to the streets to condemn the first incident. Even journalists were not spared. Even

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PHOTO: AFP

A beaming Asif Hossain Khan after striking gold at the C'wealth Games.

Asif shoots gold

SPORTS REPORTER

Sixteen-year-old marksman Asif Hossain Khan made the entire nation proud yesterday by winning the first gold medal for Bangladesh at the 17th Commonwealth Games in Manchester.

Asif shattered a 12-year-old record in men's 10-metre air rifle singles under nail-biting circumstances scoring 691.9 points in the Games' shooting competition at the National Shooting Centre in Bisley.

Asif's was the second gold medal ever for Bangladesh in the Commonwealth Games.

In 1990, Atiq-ur Rahman and Abdus Sattar Nini won the first gold for

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