

DU reopens today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Academic activities at the Dhaka University (DU) resume today after 67 days of unscheduled closure.

The university authorities said necessary steps have been taken for resumption of classes and other activities in a peaceful atmosphere on the campus.

Newly appointed Vice Chancellor (VC) of the university Prof SMA Faiz is likely to visit different faculties after resumption of classes.

Different student organisations will bring out separate processions welcoming the students back to the campus.

Most of the resident students have already returned to their respective halls, which were reopened on September 29 for their convenience.

When contacted, the VC told The Daily Star he hoped that no untoward incident would take place on the campus after the reopening of the university. The authorities were monitoring the campus situation round the clock, he said.

The DU was closed on July 28 by the then VC Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury in the wake of a massive students agitation. The students staged demonstrations on the campus protesting the July 24 police atrocities at Shamsunnahar Hall and demanded resignation of the VC. Against this backdrop, Prof Chowdhury stepped down on July 31.

On August 29, the DU Syndicate had decided to reopen the university on September 12. Later, it changed the decision.

The new VC has sought co-operation of all teachers of the university to put an end to violence on the campus and ensure a congenial academic atmosphere.

Blaming 'outsiders' for most of the violent incidents on the campus, Prof Faiz said, "We have to fight

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The putrid, rubbish-ridden water of the pond in front of the Dhaka City Corporation headquarters points to the hollowness of the city authorities' avowed commitment to keep the capital clean.

PHOTO: STAR

Police escort for commissioners

Squabbling in the ruling BNP behind the killings!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday asked the ward commissioners of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to move only with police escort, police sources said.

Police personnel have already been deployed at their residences to beef up their security, the sources added.

The DMP has asked the police stations to make a list of the commissioners who are in high risk and also a list of their rivals. Sources said four teams of detective police are already on the job.

The measures come hard on the heels of the killing of four ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)-backed

ward commissioners in the city since the April 25 DCC election, the latest one taking place in Mohammedpur in the city on Tuesday. A ward-level BNP leader was also slain in the incident.

The security wary ward commissioners are scheduled to sit with Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka at his Nagar Bhaban office at 10:30 this morning.

The government has come to know from its intelligence agencies that the killings are a sequel to the internal squabbling in the ruling party. Moreover, it is looking into the reports by the agencies that a certain ruling party quarter is behind the killing of the four ward commissioners who happened to be close to the mayor.

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Raju's killers still at large

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police are yet to arrest the killers of the Mohammadpur Police Station MA Kuddus Khan was closed Tuesday night following the killing of the ward commissioner and BNP leader Haq Nuri.

Meanwhile, Officer in charge of the Mohammadpur Police Station MA Kuddus Khan was closed Tuesday night following the killing of the ward commissioner and BNP leader.

No case was filed with the Mohammadpur Police station till 7:00 yesterday evening in connection with the killing of Raju and Nuri, commissioner of ward No. 44 and acting general secretary of ward No. 46 of the Dhaka City Corporation, respectively.

Meanwhile, 28 people arrested for suspected involvement in the killing of the ward commissioner were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday. The court placed them on a two-day remand for interrogation.

Unidentified gunmen shot and fatally wounded Raju and Nuri in front of the ward commissioner's office at Town Hall in Mohammadpur in the city. They were rushed to the Bangladesh Medical College Hospital and Nuri was shifted to the DMCH where the on-duty doctors declared him dead. Raju was moved to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) where he died Tuesday evening.

Police and other sources believe the ward commissioner might have been killed due to conflict in the local leadership. Raju was recently made convenor of the Mohammadpur unit of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) which might have angered his rivals.

Detectives are also investigating the incident.

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Zookeepers go back to work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Employees of the National Zoo went back to work yesterday, ending a daylong shutdown in protest at the death of a zookeeper on Monday.

The authorities said the zoo opened yesterday for visitors.

The zoo employees stayed off work, alleging that lack of security measures and negligence by the zoo authorities are responsible for the death of the zookeeper in an attack by bears.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, visiting the residence of Ismail Hossain Hawladar, the zookeeper, assured the employees that their demands would be considered. The mayor is likely to visit the zoo today.

The three-member inquiry committee will submit its report on the incident in three days.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh chapter of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) demanded of the authorities to recruit zoologists instead of veterinary doctors for the zoos in the country, said a press release yesterday.

Satkhira blasts Hunt on for the 'lucky escapers'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Law enforcers and other government agencies are now on a hunt for a few people who left the Roxy Cinema Hall and the district stadium, where a circus was on, just a few minutes before the bombs exploded in Satkhira.

According to police sources, two people left the cinema hall a few minutes before the explosion, while three others left the circus, organised as part of a local fair called "Gurpukurer Mela", just before the bomb blast.

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Quest for quality

Govt mulls closure of 10,000 low-standard educational institutions

STAR REPORT

The government is seriously considering closure of over 10,000 non-performing educational institutions, said the education secretary.

"The decision will help the government ensure the standard of education and save Tk 300 crore a year, now being wasted," Education Secretary Mohammad Shahidul Alam told The Daily Star.

Performance by more than 30 per cent of educational institutions does not live up to the mark, he said.

"The education ministry has identified over 10,000 educational institutions (about one-third of the total), including conventional schools and madrassahs for closure," Alam said.

The ministry initiated a study last November on the standard of education of about 30,000 institutions in the country, he said.

The ministry will submit the report to the cabinet for finalisation after completion of the study.

"A political consensus is needed for finalisation, since many institutions were set up with political motives," he said.

About such decisions in the past, he said the decision of closure largely depends on the cabinet.

The saved funds of about Tk 300 crore will be used for teachers salary, infrastructure development and projects to be taken to enhance the standard of education, he added.

The prime minister is keeping track of the study initiated after a cabinet decision last November.

Pointing to mismanagement of these institutions, he said some vested quarters are drawing deceased teachers' salaries. Also, there are some institutions where no students passed examinations.

The education secretary has said the ministry will suggest integration of very bad-performing institutions into good ones, but some institutions will definitely be closed down due to their poor performance.

Bush gets Congress seal to strike Iraq

AFP, Washington

US President George W Bush may use force against Iraq in a manner "necessary and appropriate" to protect US national security and enforce UN resolutions, according to a deal with House leaders released yesterday.

"The president is pleased that the resolution gives him the tools he needs to deal with Saddam Hussein's threat and that it does so in a way that does not tie his hands," Bush spokesman Ari Fleischer told reporters.

The US leader has told the United Nations that if it fails to approve a tough new weapons inspection regime to strip Saddam

of any nuclear, chemical or biological arms, Washington will act alone or with its allies.

Fleischer, announcing the deal shortly after the White House made the agreed-upon resolution public, said Bush believes that chances for approval by Republicans and opposition Democrats in the House was "exceptionally strong."

The resolution requires Bush to notify House and Senate leaders before any military action, or not later than 48 hours after it begins, that diplomacy has been exhausted or is doomed to fail.

It also mandates that he assure the leaders that attacking Iraq will not hamper the war on terrorism he declared after the September 11,

2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

"The president is authorised to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to: 1) defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq, and 2) enforce all relevant United Nations resolutions regarding Iraq," according to the text.

With the US Senate still trying to bridge differences between Republicans and opposition Democrats, the House International

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First one-dayer against South Africa today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh hope their form in practice matches will continue when they face South Africa in the first of their three-match one-day series, starting in Potchefstroom today.

The Bangladesh Television will provide live coverage of the day-night match, which is scheduled for a 6:30 pm (BST) start.

"Our preparation is good. We won two and lost one practice matches. It has given us some opportunity to get ourselves accustomed to the weather and condition here," said Bangladesh captain Khaled Mashud over his cell phone from South Africa yesterday.

South Africa is the only team that Bangladesh never faced in any form of international cricket although they toured the country couple of years back. They then played some three-day and one-day matches against provincial sides and ended up with awful results.

Bangladesh, who went to South Africa a week back after a humiliating ICC Champions Trophy campaign in Sri Lanka, warmed up reasonably well before going into today's match.

Bangladesh skipper was however expecting bouncer wicket in Potchefstroom than those of tour matches.

The final eleven for the match
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DU, BUET admissions set for a setback

Aspirants may have to wait for a while

SHAMEEM MAHMUD

Stalemate at the Dhaka University (DU) and the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) will delay enrollment of undergraduate students this year.

Officials of both universities said the possibility of holding admission tests by this December is slim.

The probable delay will cause a backlog of at least one year, admission seekers and guardians fear.

On the other hand, private universities have already begun admission procedures for the

2002-2003 session, just after announcement of the HSC results on September 18.

The DU reopens today after a closure of 67 days and the BUET reopened on September 28 after a disruption of academic activities since June 9.

The BUET held admission exams for the previous academic session in November 2001 and the DU in January 2002.

The DU vice-chancellor, Professor SMA Faiz, told The Daily Star that the academic council would decide on the test schedule.

The university is thinking of reducing session jams by curtailing scheduled vacations. "And this will happen only after consultations with the university bodies," Prof. Faiz said.

Prof. M Zoynul Abedin, director of students welfare, BUET, told The Daily Star that it would take at least three months more to conclude classes and examinations of the current academic session. "It's not possible to take in new students before that," he said.

"We have lost at least six months to the campus unrest over the last few months and it will affect BUET students and admission

seekers alike," Prof. Abedin said.

Talking to The Daily Star, Nazmul Islam, who topped the combined merit list of the Dhaka Education Board, said he intended to study at the BUET, but the recent academic standstill has made him think twice.

His father Saiful Islam said he was considering sending his son abroad because of campus violence and session jam here.

Equally frustrated is Nafisa Tanjunn Nipun, who stood ninth in the humanities group in the Dhaka Education Board. "I will enroll at a private university if I can afford. But I prefer to study at the DU," Nipun said.

Talking about the unwanted delay in admission exams, Principal of the Notre Dame College Benjamin D'Costa said, "It's painful to see young learners facing such unwanted backlogs at the very beginning of higher education."

About 4,500 undergraduate students enroll at the DU every year under its different faculties and institutes of science, arts, social sciences and business studies and 810 at the BUET, with an average of 70,000 admission seekers a year.

