

Emergency paves way for resumption of DU activities

DU CORRESPONDENT

In the backdrop of the state of emergency, stalled academic activities of Dhaka University (DU) owing to student strike is going to be resumed in a day or two as the authorities think 'the situation has now changed.'

The normal activities of the university have been disrupted since more than two months due to volatile political situation. Though the university reopened on November 11, a student alliance called the strike from November 20.

Vice-chancellor (VC) Prof SMA Faiz told The Daily Star that after holding meetings with the deans of faculties and provosts of residential dormitories today, the authorities would give circular about the resumption of academic activities, including examinations, admission tests and classes.

When asked about the strike, he said in a changed situation of the country, normal academic activities of the university would automatically resume and continue.

The VC said examinations of all faculties and institutes will resume from January 15 and admission test of 'Ka' unit will be held on the scheduled date of January 19.

Chhatra Sangram Parishad (CSP), a combine of 14-party-backed student bodies led by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), imposed an indefinite student strike on the university campus from November 20 demanding peaceful co-existence of all student bodies.

BNP-backed student organisation Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) allegedly drove out leaders and activists of the CSP and barred them from entering the campus and holding organisational activities since the caretaker government took over on October last.

Former Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) president Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said before resuming the academic activities, authorities will have to ensure peaceful co-existence of all student bodies so that all students can take part in classes and examinations.

BCL President Mahmud Hasan Ripon said the initiative of the university authorities seems to be politically motivated as they are going to take the decision without discussing with the student organisations.

The authorities have neither ensured co-existence of all student bodies on the campus including the residential dormitories nor they have arrested armed cadres of the JCD, he said.

"The VC should take the decision of resuming academic activities after discussing with all student bodies," Ripon demanded.

Huge cache of arms recovered in Bandarban

UNB, Bandarban

Huge cache of arms were recovered from near Jamchharipara in Nihongchhari upazila of the hill district early yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, BDR members recovered the weapons, which were kept hidden under earth of a hill.

Recovered arms include four mortar shells, one home made gun, one sawed-off rifle and three rounds of bullet.

Somali warlords agree to disarm amid deadly gunbattle

AFP, Mogadishu

Key Somali warlords agreed yesterday to disarm their fighters and join the government, but the breakthrough was marred by a deadly gunbattle during talks that brokered the accord.

Seven warlords, who controlled most of Mogadishu before it fell to Islamist fighters in June, signed the pact, even as forces loyal to one of them engaged in a firefight with security forces outside the talks' venue.

"The principle warlords who controlled parts of the Somali capital have decided to surrender their weapons to the transitional federal government," government spokesman Abdurahman Dinari told AFP.

"They also agreed to instruct their militiamen to join the national army to be trained and the government has accepted," he said, adding that a joint committee to oversee the disarmament and integration would meet on Saturday.

The Islamists, some of whom are linked to Al-Qaeda, were driven from the capital and most of their other strongholds in the south over the past two weeks after Ethiopia sent troops to Somalia to support the weak government.

The defeat of the Islamists had fuelled fears of a power vacuum and a return to lawlessness and warlordism in the bullet-scarred Somali capital.

"This is a great opportunity for the government to enhance security," Dinari said of the warlords' decision. "They fully committed themselves to be a full part of the government."

He named the warlords involved as Mohamed Qanyare Afrah, Musa Sudi Yalahwo, Omar Mohamed Mohamoud, Issa Batan Alin, Abdi Hassan Awale Qeybidd, Omar Habeb and Bashir Raghe Shirar.

Tk 50 crore received for cancer hospital

Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH) fund has so far received Tk 50 crore as donations and grants, says a press release.

The amount includes receipt of Tk 26 lakh 62 thousand and one hundred in December.

Those who have donated in December are: Habeeba Lopa Selim Tk 20 lakh, QA Siddiqui Tk 5 lakh, Maliha Quddus and Westecs Ltd Tk 50 thousand each, Sonali Paper & Board Mills Tk 25 thousand, Mustaqf Ali Khan Tk 30 thousand, Nilufar Sultana Tk 5 thousand, Tasneem Tawhid and Badrul Anam Tk one thousand each and Kohinoor Karim Tk 100.

Habeeba donated the amount for dedicating a 5-bed ward in memory of her two sisters, who died of cancer while QA Siddiqui donated for a bed to be dedicated in memory of his parents, Mouli Abdul Quadir Siddiqui and Mahmuda Khatun Siddiqui.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission authorities requested all to come forward with whatever they like to donate and thereby be associated with this noble venture.

Meanwhile, construction of the hospital building is progressing fast as per schedule and presently work for the fourth floor is going on.

DBBL stands by cold-hit people

Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited has decided to distribute 20,000 blankets among the cold-hit people in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Joypurhat, Bogra and Sirajganj districts, says a press release.

Managing Director of the Bank Md Yeasin Ali visited some areas in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon and Dinajpur on January 11 and distributed blankets among the cold affected people with the help of local Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) authorities.

Lt Colonel Abdul Hamid Sarder was present at the distribution ceremony.



PHOTO: STAR

Labourers, who came to Dhaka from Jamalpur in search of work, walk past an army jeep near Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

Schoolboy murdered in Burichang

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Unidentified assailants slaughtered a schoolboy in Burichang upazila of the district.

The boy was identified as Md Robiul Hasan, son of Abdul Barez of Bakeshor village of Burichang and a student of class six.

Police sources said Robiul went missing on Thursday evening when some unknown persons called him out and later his body was found in a filed of the village yesterday morning.

Police arrested Mainal Hossain on suspicion of having connection with the murder.

Death anniversary



Today is the 4th death anniversary of former minister M Mansur Ali, says a press release.

On the occasion, M Mansur Ali Smriti Sangsad has arranged a discussion on his life and a doa mahfil at 4:00pm today at Sathkira Jana Samity Office at 44-F/7, Panthapath in the city.

PALESTINIAN STALEMATE

Mediators push for breakthrough

AFP, Gaza City

Mediators are seeking to bring together Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas and the Damascus-based leader of Hamas, Khaled Meshaal, in a bid to defuse the deadly power struggle between their two parties, officials in Gaza said yesterday.

One source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that Islamic Jihad, a smaller rival of Hamas, and Egypt were behind the moves to "contain the explosive situation in the Gaza Strip after the recent clashes."

An Islamic Jihad leader, Mohammed al-Hindi, confirmed the development, adding that a meeting could take place on Tuesday.

Hindi was speaking from Cairo, where he said he had met with several Egyptian officials in recent days as well as with a delegation from Abbas's Fatah party, led by its Gaza strongman Mohammed Dahlan.

He said a meeting between Abbas and Meshaal could break a standoff between the two parties that has prevented them from achieving their expressed goal of forming a government of national unity.

"I hope that these efforts will be rewarded by the signature of a national accord in Cairo in the coming days," Hindi said.

Meanwhile, sources close to Abbas said that he had received an invitation from Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to visit Damascus.

That trip "could take place on January 16 (Tuesday), and president Abbas is not against a meeting with Meshaal," one of them said.

The source explained that an independent Palestinian MP close to Hamas, Ziad Abu Amr, and Mohammed Rashid, a former advisor to the late Palestinian leader and Fatah founder Yasser Arafat, had met with Meshaal to pave the way for a meeting.

Two killed in Comilla road crashes

UNB, Comilla

Two people were killed in separate road accidents in the district yesterday.

Police said an unidentified driver of a tank lorry was killed as the lorry and a truck collided head-on at Kalakachua in Burichang upazila at about 9:00am.

In another incident, a helper of a tractor, Neyamat Ullah, 22, died on the spot when the tractor turned turtle at Suaganj Ulone in Sadar south upazila in the morning.

Police recovered two bodies and sent to local hospital morgue for autopsy.

GOPALGANJ
A Gopalganj report adds: A bicyclist was killed and his co-rider injured as a bus hit their bicycle at Ghonapara crossing in Sadar upazila on Thursday.

The dead was identified as Habibur Rahman Sheikh, 17, hailed from Mollarhat upazila of Bagerhat district.

Witnesses said the accident occurred when the Dhaka-bound bus from Khulna hit the bicycle, leaving Habibur dead on the spot and his nephew Tymur injured critically.

Police arrested the bus driver and seized the vehicle.

100 BAU admission seekers cheated

RU CORRESPONDENT

Around 100 admission seekers of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) were cheated by a fake firm that collected a large amount of money as admission test fees from the students assuming them of supplying admit cards.

The victims lodged a complaint with the Boalia Police Station in this respect yesterday and staged demonstration in front of the office of 'Friends Quick Service' at Alupatti in the city.

Students lamented that their admission test was scheduled for today at Bangladesh Agriculture University campus in Mymensingh. The cheated students Quamrunnahr, Rajib and Sajjad alleged that one Shamim Ahmed, a second year student of political science department of Rajshahi University College, was the local agent of the fake firm.

He assured the admission seekers of processing every thing regarding the admission test.

The admission seekers gave him Tk 550 for each candidate including Tk 450 as bank draft in favour of the BAU.

But Shamim embezzled the money and did not make any arrangement for their admission test, they alleged.

The agitated students urged the police to arrest Shamim and give him exemplary punishment.

Police raided the office but found none.

Journos demand withdrawal of 'censorship' on press

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist leaders yesterday demanded immediate withdrawal of the 'censorship' and restrictions imposed on the media as part of the state of emergency declared by President Iajuddin Ahmed Thursday night.

At a meeting at the Jatiya Press Club, they also demanded withdrawal of the restriction on broadcasting of news by the private television channels within 24 hours.

Criticising and protesting the imposition of restrictions on the media, the journalists said the media and common people must not be the victims of the state of emergency.

They said it is rather those who looted public wealth while in power, repressed journalists, teachers, lawyers, political leaders and activists, and common people, and politicised the administration and judiciary should be punished now.

The journalist leaders said instead of suspending people's fundamental rights during the state of emergency action should be taken against those who resorted to corruption and abused power causing sufferings to common people.

Former Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) president Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, BFUJ Secretary General Abdul Jalil Bhuyian, Dhaka Union of Journalists President Altaf Mahmud and General Secretary Omar Faruk, Jatiya Press Club former general secretary Shafiqur Rahman, daily Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shyamal Dutta, journalist leaders Farazi Ajmal Hossain, Amirul Momenin and Saiful Islam Talukder spoke at the meeting presided over by BFUJ President Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul.

They strongly declared that they will in no way accept any interruption in people's constitutional rights to know through a free flow of information.

The journalists community--united to uphold the freedom of the media--will be forced to declare tough countrywide programmes if the restriction is not withdrawn immediately, they said.

US plans to keep 2 carriers in Gulf for months

AFP, Washington

The United States plans to keep two aircraft carrier battle groups in the Gulf for months to step up the US military presence in the region, a senior US military official said Thursday.

In addition to ordering the deployment of the aircraft carrier USS John C Stennis, the Pentagon announced that an air defence battalion equipped with Patriot missile defence systems will also go to the region.

Both moves were mentioned by President George W. Bush in a televised speech Wednesday on Iraq, who said they were aimed at bolstering security in the region and protecting US interests in the Middle East.

"It will be the first time since '03 that we've had two carriers in the region," said a senior US military official, referring to a period during the US invasion of Iraq.

"The second carrier while there

will not be just showing force, but will be actively involved in combat operations and providing air support. It will be a flexible, useful tool across the region," he said.

The move comes amid mounting tension between the United States and Iran over its nuclear programme and US charges of Iranian meddling in Iraq.

US forces detained six Iranian nationals in a search and cordon operation in the northern Iraqi city of Arbil, a US defence official said. The Pentagon denied Iranian reports that the six were seized in a raid on an Iranian consulate in the city.

The official said the deployment of the Patriot missile batteries was intended to reassure regional allies and partners "that regional threats of ballistic missiles that they may feel up close and personal can be countered in partnership with us."



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderate fog may occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog elsewhere over the country during late night to early morning, said Met Office.

It also said mild cold wave is sweeping over the regions of Tangail, Faridpur, Srimongal, Rajshahi, Ishurdi, Jessore, Chuadanga and Barisal divisions and it may continue.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. Highest temperature 27.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and Sitakundu and lowest 08.6 degrees at Jessore and Ishurdi.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:31pm today and rises at 6:44am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	25.2	11.5	53	56
Chittagong	27.0	13.6	83	50
Rajshahi	25.0	09.2	88	62
Khulna	25.0	11.0	81	61
Barisal	25.6	09.2	81	70
Sylhet	26.5	12.8	78	60
Cox's Bazar	27.2	14.0	69	56



Managing Director of Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited Md Yeasin Ali distributes blankets among the cold-affected people in northern region of the country. On his right is Lt Colonel Abdul Hamid Sarder.

DHAKA

T O D A Y

Roundtable
Pragotisheel Chetona Sangsad will hold a roundtable on 'Democracy and ninth general election'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Rotary Dhaka Central
The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.