

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 Jatiyatobadi 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 Jamchharpura in Nirkongchhara 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 Islamists in June, signed the pact, even as forces loyal to one of them engaged in a fire fight 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 Abdirahman 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, Yahawo, Omar Mohamed Mohamud, Issa Batan Alin, Abdi Hassan Awale Qeyyibid, 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, Malina Quddus and Westecs Ltd Tk 50 thousand each, Sonali Paper & Board Mills Tk 25 thousand, Mustaq Ali Khan Tk 30 thousand, Nilufar Sultan 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 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.

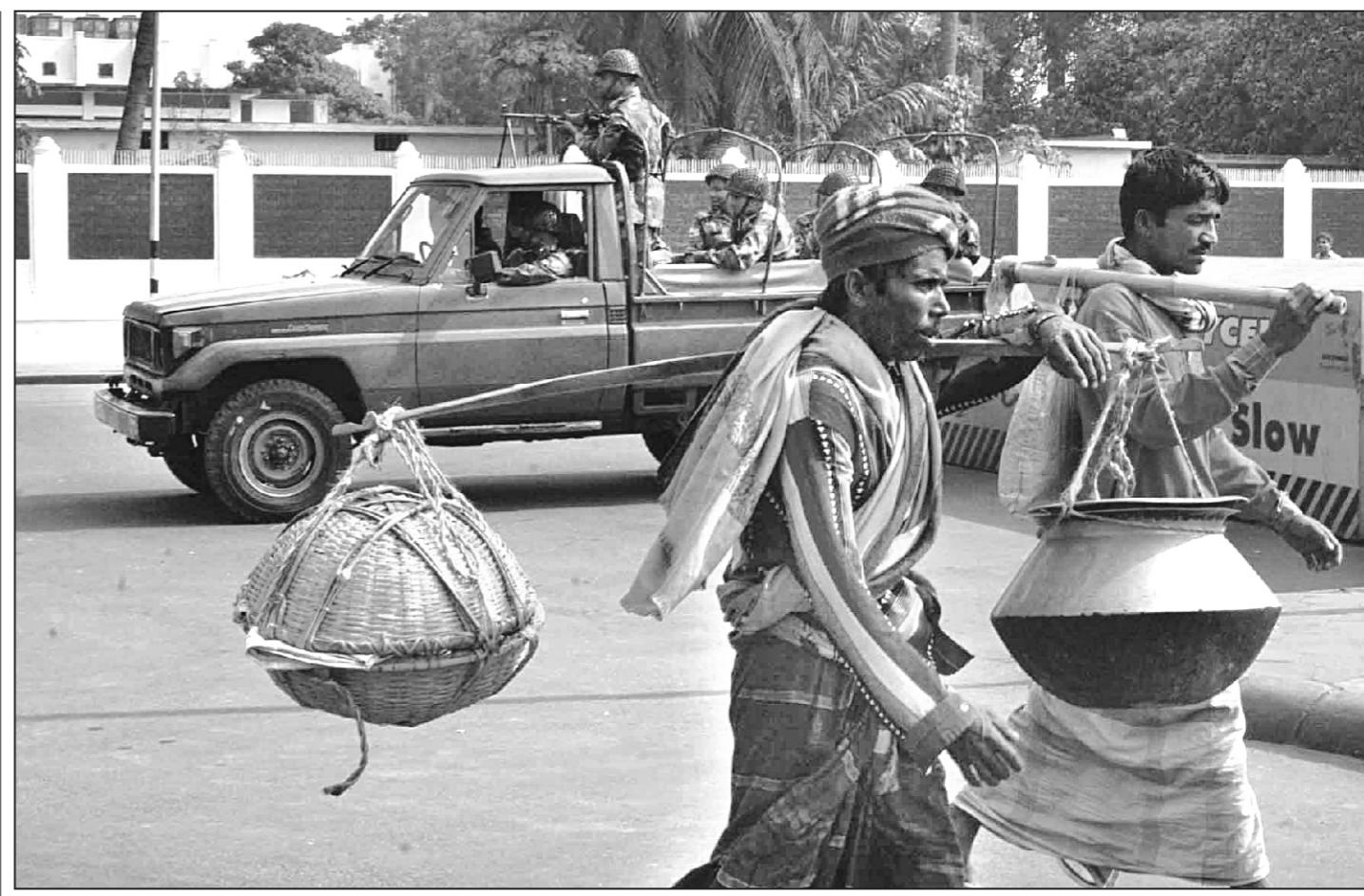


PHOTO: STAR

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



President of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) Altaf Mahmud speaks at a meeting yesterday protesting the imposition of restrictions on the media. On his left is DUJ General Secretary Omar Faruq and on his right are Editor of The Bangladesh Observer Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) President Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul and Secretary General Abdul Jalil Bhuyian.

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 journalists 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 Faruq, Jatiya Press Club former general secretary Shafiqur Rahman, daily Bhoror 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.

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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."

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