

## DU erupts in violence as army beats students

Removal of army camp demanded, indefinite strike called

DU CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of students at Dhaka University (DU) fought running battles with police last night demanding the removal of an army base from the campus and an apology from the army for the beating up of three students earlier in the afternoon.

More than 50 students and several police were injured in the confrontations in which police fired rubber bullets and tear gas canisters as well as using water cannon and repeated baton charges. Students pelted the police with stones and bricks.

Of the injured, at least 25 students received treatment from Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Students protesting police and army brutality called an indefinite student strike at DU starting today.

The initial cause of the demonstrations was an incident at around 3.30 pm when army personnel mercilessly beat three DU students and humiliated a teacher over a petty dispute concerning comments passed by spectators watching a soccer match at the university's gymnasium ground where an army camp is situated.

The soccer match was between public administration and journalism departments. During a penalty shoot-out Mehedi Mohammad, a student at the public administration department stood up in front of a group of army personnel, obscuring the army members' view.

Army members allegedly abused

him verbally and asked him to move before beginning to beat Mehedi and his friends.

Mehedi along with Shafiq and Lucas, all MSS students of public administration, and Dipu, a third year student of the same department were taken to DMCH for treatment.

As Mubashsher Munayem, a teacher of public administration tried to stop the incident, army personnel also humiliated him.

In protest students demonstrated against the army action, demanding an apology and the removal of the army camp from the campus. In response police baton charged the students injuring five or six of them.

By early evening news of the

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AUG 21 BLASTS

Home secretary claims 'significant progress' in probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Secretary Abdul Karim yesterday said significant progress has been made in the investigation of August 21, 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital.

He however could not confirm when the charge sheet will be submitted.

The home secretary after a meeting of the monitoring cell of home ministry said an accused named Joy Miah already made a confessional statement, and the investigators are now also focusing on finding out whether Islamic militants and Mufti Hannan, who had been involved in different other grenade attacks in the country, also had hands behind the deadly August 21 attack.

He said reports of different intelligence agencies are also being

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OMS PROGRAMME

Rice to be sold at Tk 19 a kg in Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to sell rice at Tk 19 per kg through Open Market Sale (OMS) programme during Ramadan in a bid to rein in its price spike during the month of fasting.

Besides, the government started the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme in 12 districts from yesterday.

The decision to sell rice through OMS was taken yesterday at an inter-ministerial meeting chaired by Food and Disaster Management Adviser Tapan Chowdhury, held at the finance ministry's conference room.

The programme is scheduled to start from September 10 and will

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PHOTO: STAR

Students of Dhaka University demonstrate in front of their gymnasium last night demanding removal of the temporary army camp set up there. The protest began after army personnel had beaten up several students during a football match.

ACC targets to get 150 convicted by Dec 2008

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has set a target to have 150 corrupt people convicted by December 2008 if there is no act of god.

"At the current rate of inquiry, investigation and conviction in lower courts, we'll be able to reach the target of having 150 corrupt people convicted by December 2008 if there is no act of god and the High Court upholds the verdicts," ACC Secretary Mokhesur Rahman told a questioner at the commission's regular briefing yesterday.

About filing any case against BNP Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, he said the first

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## EC to ask again for lifting politics ban

Electoral roadmap to be hampered if reform talks not started in September

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) will ask the caretaker government once again for lifting the ban on indoor politics if it sees no sign of withdrawal of the ban by August 30, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said yesterday.

"Implementation of the electoral roadmap will be hampered if the ban on indoor politics is not lifted for holding dialogue with the political parties from September," CEC Huda told reporters.

The caretaker government had earlier assured the EC of withdrawal of the ban on indoor politics by August, allowing the commission to hold talks with the parties from early September according to the roadmap, sources in the EC said.

But the government has apparently retreated from its stance on lifting the ban in view of the prevailing situation, they added.

"We will wait till August 30 with the hope that the ban on indoor politics will be no more from early September. If we see no sign for

withdrawal of the ban, we will request the government before end of this month to lift the ban. We have no alternative but to ask the government for it [lifting the ban]," Huda said.

In a bid to begin dialogue with the political parties on electoral reforms, the CEC at a meeting with the law adviser on April 4 asked the government to lift the ban on indoor politics, which was

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AL demands proper probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday demanded proper investigation into the August 21 grenade attack of 2004 on an AL rally and exemplary punishment to those who had "direct or indirect links" in the onslaught.

"The present caretaker government has taken many initiatives but it has not yet taken any initiative [to punish the perpetrators] for the 21 August grenade attack. We urge them [the government] to take measures in this regard and punish the real culprits," said Zillur Rahman, acting president of the AL, during a press conference at his Gulshan residence.

To observe the day, AL will place wreaths at a temporary memorial in front of the AL headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue today. It will also arrange special prayers for the

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Govt decides to sell 3 licences for VoIP Auction in October

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government finally declared yesterday that it will sell licences to private operators at an auction in October for running the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) business.

It has decided to sell licences for three international gateways (IGW) and two interconnect exchanges (ICX) to the highest bidders.

The much-awaited declaration that came at a press briefing at the telecommunications ministry yesterday will mean an end to the government's monopoly over IGW, the mechanism through which international calls are sent and received.

In a written statement, the telecoms authorities announced that

the government has approved the much-awaited International Long Distance Telecommunications Services (ILDTS) Policy, 2007 to liberalise VoIP, also called internet telephony.

Telecommunications Secretary Sheikh Khurshid Alam and Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Maj Gen (retired) Manzurul Alam were present at the briefing.

Under the ILDTS policy, no foreign companies including the present land and mobile phone operators will be eligible to take part in the bidding for the licences.

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JMB man to die for Jamalpur killing

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a Majlish-e-Shura member of the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), a banned Islamist outfit, to death for killing a Christian youth in Jamalpur four years back.

Judge Mohammad Israil Hossain of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 handed down the sentence in the presence of the convict, Salahuddin alias Salehin, at a packed courtroom.

The court acquitted two other JMB members -- Amir Khan and Sharif Monwar alias Shiplu -- as the charges brought against them were not proved.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence finished their arguments and the court recorded statements of 14 prosecution witnesses.

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## More floods, fresh fears

STAR REPORT

Swelling rivers caused inundation of many new areas in the north and south-central parts of the country yesterday while numerous flood victims stayed back in the flood shelters and on embankments fearing more flooding.

With the distension of the Karotoa at Gaibandha, the Kabodak at Satkhira and the Jamuna at Sirajganj, new areas were inundated while river erosion in the north took a serious turn for the worse.

The monsoon remains active upstream in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh and started diminishing in Bihar. The water level of the Jamuna saw a 1cm rise at Chilmari, 1cm at Bahadurabad, 5cm at Sirajganj and 3cm at Aricha. It, however, remained steady at Noonkhawa yesterday, Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said.

Meanwhile, the water level of the Padma recorded a 6cm rise at Pankha, 9cm at Rajshahi, 9cm at Hardinge Bridge and remained steady at Goalundo and Bhagyakul. The Padma was flowing 36cm above its danger levels at Goalundo and 30cm at Bhagyakul yesterday morning.

The FFWC said the Padma at Bhagyakul and Goalundo and the

Jamuna at Aricha is likely to distend further.

Flood situation in Manikganj, Munshiganj, Faridpur, Rajbari, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Gopalganj, Chandpur and Dohar and Nawabganj upazilas of Dhaka is likely to improve or remain unchanged.

Physicians, meanwhile, fear pneumonia, typhoid, hepatitis-B, conjunctivitis and skin diseases would spread more due to use of filthy water during the flooding. The diarrhoea situation in the country, however, appeared to have improved slightly.

Experts at the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases and Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B) said they observed admission of more patients with pneumonia, blood-dysentery and fever in the last two days.

Shahadat Hossain, scientist and head of Longer Stay Unit of ICDDR, B, said, "If the patients are examined, many of them would be diagnosed with typhoid and hepatitis-B. These are all post flood health complications."

At least 780 diarrhoea patients mostly from the city and its outskirts were admitted to ICDDR, B in 24 hours ending at yesterday noon. There were 4,052 new diarrhoea

patients across the country yesterday. A total of 64,991 people have now been infected with diarrhoea since July 30 and nine died of it.

According to the control room of the Directorate of General Health Services, around 1,012 people were newly infected with respiratory tract infections (RTI), raising the total to 16,060 since July 30. At least 13 died of RTI so far.

The number of patients with skin diseases stood at 16,147 with 1,138 newly infected yesterday while the number of patients with conjunctivitis stood at 3,982 with 313 newly infected.

Since July 30, a total of 518 people drowned and 40 people died of snakebites. The flood-related death toll now stands at 580.

Our correspondent in Gaibandha reports: Water gushing through breaches in different embankments flooded many areas of four upazilas in Gaibandha for the second time. The Karotoa at Gobindaganj swelled 14cm yesterday, according to the Water Development Board (WDB).

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PHOTO: STAR

Sandbags and bamboos have been placed on a 60-foot stretch of Dohar-Mawa Road at Louhajang after the recent flooding had washed away a large swath of the road.

Pabna farmers block highway for fertiliser

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Failing to get fertiliser, several thousand aggrieved farmers yesterday blockaded the Pabna-Rajshahi highway at Tebunia in Pabna bringing traffic movement to a halt.

Police and joint forces rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

A probe committee has been formed to investigate the incident.

Several thousand farmers from different villages of Maligasa union under Pabna Sadar Upazila thronged Tebunia Bazar yesterday morning for fertiliser. Failing to get fertiliser, the agitating farmers put barricades on the Pabna-Rajshahi highway at Tebunia creating a long gridlock.

On information, Pabna police and joint forces rushed to the scene and brought the situation under control.

Pabna Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and other government officials visited the spot. They claimed that there was no crisis of fertiliser in the area. The incident

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