

Duta for lifting state of emergency

Syndicate backs Duta demands

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) in an emergency general meeting yesterday demanded lifting of the state of emergency to pave the way for establishing democratic environment.

The meeting held in the afternoon also demanded resignation of the adviser for home, the home secretary and the inspector general of police (IGP) for the incidents on the campus. They urged the army and police department to apologise for the incidents.

It also demanded withdrawal of case, if any, filed against any student in connection with the incidents.

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President assures EC all-out help to implement poll roadmap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday assured the Election Commission (EC) of all-out cooperation in implementing its electoral roadmap for holding the stalled ninth parliamentary election by 2008.

Emerging from the Bangabhaban, official residence of the president, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda reiterated that the election would be held by 2008 as per the electoral roadmap regardless of the situation in the country.

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Day of fury, pitched battle

DU violence spikes on second day, over 150 injured; 100 vehicles bashed; army car burns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Much of Dhaka city turned into battlegrounds as angry students continued fighting with police for the second day of violence, following beating of a Dhaka University student by a few army personnel Monday.

Thousands of students came out of the dormitories with sticks and stones and fought with police on and around the campus, leaving at least 150 injured. They went on a frenzy, demanding removal of an army camp from the campus, and bashed at least 100 vehicles indiscriminately at Shahbagh, New Market, Nilkhet and other adjoining areas.

The protest gathered momentum as students from other educational institutions including BUET, Dhaka College, Jagannath University and Titumir College also marched onto the streets. Fighting crept across the city up to Satmasjid Road in the evening. Skirmishes with police were continuing when this report was filed at 10:30pm.

The protest fever quickly caught across the country as students of Jahangirnagar University, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet, Mymensingh Agricultural University, Islamic University at Kushtia, Carmichael University College in Rangpur, Brojomohon College in Barisal and few other institutions also joined ranks with the agitating Dhaka students.

The authorities later decided to remove the army camp from the

Dhaka University campus and the government apologised Monday's incident. But that could not douse the anger as students continued their fighting with police into the night.

Students protesting police and

army 'excesses' called a strike at educational institutions across the country for today alongside an indefinite strike at DU. All scheduled examinations at the university and Home Economics College have been postponed till August 28.

In yesterday's clash police fired several hundred teargas canisters and students responded by pelting stones and brickbats. At least three vehicles—two passenger buses and a pickup—were set ablaze while more than a hundred were vanda-

lised at New Market, Shahbagh, Palashi, Science Laboratory Crossing, and Bangabazar areas.

STUDENTS' FIVE-POINT DEMAND

The agitating students at a press

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Riot police and students of Dhaka University clash in front of Rokeya Hall yesterday on the second day of confrontation between them.

Withdrawal of army camp at DU begins

Govt regrets; judicial probe in process

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The caretaker government yesterday ordered withdrawal of the army camp from Dhaka University (DU) campus by today, and a judicial enquiry into the violent incidents that left over 250 people, mostly students, injured in the last two days.

Action will be taken against persons responsible for the incidents, the government said.

The process of withdrawal of the army camp began at 8:00 last night to be completed by today.

Reviewing the situation arising out of disturbances on the DU campus since Monday evening, the interim government deeply regretted the incidents and appealed to all

concerned to maintain peace and discipline on campuses.

In the face of violent protest by thousands of students at beating up students and demand for withdrawal of the army camp, a high level meeting chaired by Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office yesterday afternoon took these decisions.

An enquiry has been initiated by the army into the 'unfortunate incident' that took place yesterday (Monday) on the Dhaka University playground, and the investigation would be concluded as soon as possible, and action against those found responsible will be taken," said an official statement after the meeting.

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Protest spreads to other institutions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following the police and army brutalities on DU students on Monday night students of different universities across the country including Jahangirnagar University (JU), Chittagong University (CU), and Rajshahi University (RU) burst into protest yesterday, bringing academic activities to an abrupt halt.

The demonstrating students brought out processions chanting slogans against the army, wore black badges, vandalised vehicles and blocked vehicular movement on roads protesting the incident.

Different student bodies in the universities also enforced student

strike and demanded treatment of the injured DU students.

The students also demanded punishment to the persons responsible for the incident at DU, withdrawal of state of emergency and withdrawal of police and army camps from all university campuses.

Demanding immediate realisation of the students' demands, university teachers expressed solidarity with the student strike. Additional police were also deployed at the universities to avert untoward incidents.

JAHANGIRNAGAR UNIVERSITY Traffic on Dhaka-Aricha highway remained snarled for an hour

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AL mourns grenade horror

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) and its allies in the 14-party combine, and several other organisations yesterday observed the third anniversary of the gruesome grenade attack on an AL rally in the capital with a call to ensure prompt punishment of the real culprits.

Describing the day as a day of disgrace, AL acting president Zillur Rahman accused the previous BNP-Jamaat government of carrying out the heinous attack aiming to kill AL President Sheikh Hasina.

"But she (Hasina) is now in jail and it's painful for all democratic forces," Zillur Rahman

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HC ON EMERGENCY POWER RULES

Why restricting bail, seizing property not unconstitutional

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday ordered the government to explain within eight weeks why some sections of the emergency power rules shall not be declared unconstitutional.

The sections disputed include the ones that provide for curbing the right to bail and confiscating properties.

In response to a writ petition filed by Abdul Quddus Mandal of Natore, the HC bench of Justices Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman and Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury also asked the government to show cause why filing an

extortion case against the petitioner under the emergency rules shall not be adjudged illegal.

The court stayed proceedings of the case against Mandal till disposal of the rule. The home secretary and some other government officials have been made respondents to the rule.

Abdul Quddus Mandal filed the writ petition with the HC on August 14, challenging some sections of the Emergency Power Rules (EPR), 2007. The sections disputed include the one on confiscating properties.

He also questioned legality of the government move having the

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Moeen blames bankers for creating panic

Says their dealing with clients tantamount to blackmailing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff Gen Moeen U Ahmed yesterday blamed bankers for creating panic among businessmen, and termed the bankers' style of dealing with their clients since the declaration of the state of emergency as 'nothing else but blackmailing'.

"Bankers are responsible for creating panic among the business community. I even heard that some bankers have been threatening their clients with disclosures of their account information since the declaration of the state of emergency," Gen Moeen said while

addressing members of the Bangladesh Association of Bankers (BAB), a forum of bank owners.

After the army chief's speech, during the question-answer session the bank owners did not contradict with Moeen's allegation, but demanded that the government withdraws some central bank directives, which curtail the power of the board of directors of banks. BAB Chairman M Saidduzzaman chaired the meeting.

Describing the bankers' attitude to their clients, Gen Moeen said, "It was mandatory to fill in a form [for notifying the central bank] for transactions over five

lakh taka through any bank, a rule that the banks did not follow in the past, but since the state of emergency had been declared, the bankers started to hand over the forms to their clients, making them frightened."

"As far as I know the government has yet to issue such an instruction, but the bankers created panic among the business community anyway," he said.

"I even heard that some bankers threatened their clients with disclosure of how much money they have in the banks. Thus the business community held back and the

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Incidents regretted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society members, academics and human rights activists yesterday termed the clashes between the army and Dhaka University (DU) students regrettable, undesirable, anti-academic and a consequence of the army's lack of respect for the university students.

They said it is a failure of the DU authorities, the army and the police to resolve the issue in the beginning.

They appealed to the authorities to take appropriate measures to stop the clashes and urged the students to refrain from destroying public properties, saying it cannot be the means for establishing justice.

In his reaction to the army-students clashes, renowned educationist Prof Muzaffer Ahmad told The Daily Star, "It is a failure of the university and the police administration as well as of the army to resolve the issue in the beginning."

Such an incident is very undesirable and anti-academic, which will hamper academic environment of the university if immediate actions are not taken to stop it, he added.

Terming the clashes between the army and the students totally undesirable, human rights activist advocate Sultana Kamal said more responsibility for this incident goes to the army, as they are in a position to help the government establish democracy.

Criticising the setting up of an army camp at the university campus, she said the government should have had more foresight in dealing with the students' issues.

"Posting of the army to control the university area is a backward thinking," she said, adding that those who are helping to establish democratic values should practise norms of good governance and democracy.

Former adviser to a caretaker

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Charges framed against Abbas' wife for tax evasion

STAR REPORT

An anti-graft court yesterday framed charge against Afroza Abbas, wife of former BNP minister Mirza Abbas, for evading income tax.

Another special court will give its judgment in a tax evasion case laid against Mahbuba Sultana, wife of detained former BNP lawmaker Mosaddak Ali-Falu, in absentia today.

Meantime, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) will interrogate Salahuddin, Quader Chowdhury, political adviser to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, former BNP minister Nazmul Huda and his wife Sigma Huda at jail gate in connection with graft cases against them.

MIRZA ABBAS' WIFE Judge AK Roy of a special court at the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar MP Hostel framed the charge in the case against Afroza which was filed by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) because she allegedly evaded tax on her assets and income of nearly Tk 6 crore, reports BSS.

The accused has been absconding since the case was filed.

The court fixed August 23 for recording the witnesses' depositions.

FALU'S WIFE Judge Firoz Alam of the First Special Judge's Court at the Sher-e-

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Food crisis, price hike may become regular event

PORIMOL PALMA

The country is under imminent threat of a serious food crisis and price hike might turn into a regular phenomenon, say experts.

High prices of grains on international market, domestic drawbacks in agricultural production and the likelihood of recurring floods are a few reasons for the looming crises, they said.

The government's failure to procure grains in time due to its inefficiency and its mismanagement of the supply chain are also likely to aggravate the situation that will certainly affect the low-income groups, they observed.

They suggested that the government should urgently invest more in agricultural research, technological development to improve domestic food production, and market management.

According to an international agency in Dhaka, international price for best quality rice was \$ 260 per metric tonne in 2005. The price was \$ 320 in 2006 and it reached \$ 340 this year.

On the other hand, international price for wheat was \$ 160 per metric tonne in 2005. The price hit, \$ 210 in 2006 and it soared to \$ 245

this year.

Food prices on the international market might see an increase by up to 80 percent due to an increasing trend of producing biofuels from crops. More and more farmlands are now shifting toward producing such renewable energy, said International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), an international agricultural think-tank.

Dr Uttam Kumar Dev, senior research fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said referring to the WTO (World Trade Organization) consultation that food price in the next few years is likely to increase despite more subsidies in agriculture in the developing countries.

On the other hand, he said, "Domestic food production is also facing enormous challenges, as farmland is decreasing by 1 percent annually, while an additional 2 lakh people every year are putting pressure on the food stock."

Domestic food production, however, has almost reached the optimum level through the maximum use of existing technologies. As such, "Possibility of change in food yield frontiers is very little,"

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