

Day of fury, pitched

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conference at the Madhur Canteen last evening announced a five-point demand. Those include withdrawal of army and police camps from educational institutions across the country within the next 24 hours, punishment to the culprits in the Monday evening's and the following incidents, a public apology from army chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed, treatment and compensation for the wounded in the two days' violence, and guarantee of a democratic environment throughout the country.

Expressing solidarity with the students, the Dhaka University Teachers Association too has demanded withdrawal of the army camp within 12:00 noon today.

VC'S PRESS BRIEFING

DU acting Vice-Chancellor (VC) Prof AFM Yusuf Haider met Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at around 3:00pm. Later in the evening, he called a press briefing at his DU office where he said the government has expressed regret for the untoward incidents and pledged to take action against the army men responsible for the assault on students and teachers.

The government also assured the VC of bearing the medical expenses and compensation for the wounded students.

A judicial probe body has been formed to investigate the Monday mayhem, he added. "As soon as we get a list of the arrestee students, we will act to have them free," said Prof Haider, also Pro-VC of the university.

He assured that students who took part in the demonstrations would not be subject to any harassment in future. He then appealed for calm as he thinks the demands have already been met.

FIGHTS ON CAMPUS

Students began pouring out of the halls including the female dormitories since early in the morning. By 10:00am, the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) was packed full of students armed with sticks and stones. As they attempted to march towards the army camp in the university playground, police intercepted them on the road near Shamsunnahar Hall.

Police fired around 50 teargas canisters to disperse the procession while the protesters answered with stones and bricks.

After about half an hour of clash, the students moved towards the VC's residence and held a rally there. The Pro-VC, proctor and some teachers at that time approached the agitating students and asked them to calm down.

At one stage of the demonstrations, a group of students brought a run-down pickup and attempted to pull down the huge iron gate at the entrance of the VC's residence. Policemen posted there fired teargas shells leading to another bout of clash.

At least 20 students were injured during the fight that spread to the Mal Chatter lying between the Arts Building and registrar's office.

During the daylong clashes, the university library, Modern Language Institute and the registrar building were shut down. The demonstrators tore down a concrete wall of the Institute of Business Administration and smashed windowpanes of the building on hearing that classes were going on there.

Police began beating a retreat at around 1:30pm when the entire campus went under students' control. At that time, the slogan "Esho Bhai, Esho Bon, Gore Tuli Andolon" (Come gather 'round brothers and sisters, unite in a movement) reverberated along the length. Besides, the marchers clamoured for immediate resignation of the chief adviser and the army boss.

They burnt effigies of Moeen U Ahmed and put up barricades on almost every road. After the police left, they set ablaze a pickup van at TSC and tore down billboards and banners.

Throughout the day, they burnt tires and other objects to shield themselves from teargas. All the entrances to the campus remained sealed off as ambulances were busy rushing the injured to the hospitals.

Students of the Fine Arts scrawled graffiti over the road in front of the institute. One of those read "We want a campus free of army and police."

Police and students fought pitched battles at the Nikhet intersection for around an hour starting from 11:00am. Police used teargas while students retaliated with brickbats. During the melee, police gave two students severe beatings.

CLASHES AT SHAHBAGH

Around 50 students carrying rods, sticks and brickbats rushed to Shahbagh area where around 100 vehicles were stuck on both sides of the road due to heavy traffic caused by the clash on the campus.

The students started vandalising the vehicles at about 12:15pm. They damaged at least 50 vehicles including an army car, which was also trapped there.

The students also beat up the

army car's driver, also an army soldier named Kamrul, leaving him injured seriously.

Later, the car caught fire automatically.

A police truck fitted with a water cannon came to the spot and doused the fire. A crane took the skeleton of the car later.

Pedestrians admitted the driver to the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital for primary treatment.

A group of students pelted brickbats at police from the rooftop of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall. Police replied with tear gas shells.

Police later stopped movement vehicular movements on the road toward Elephant road.

On their way back to the campus, the students also damaged around 10 vehicles.

The mayhem continued in the area until yesterday evening.

At around 4:00pm, a group of students set fire to a BRTC bus near Railway Hospital and smashed window glasses of four other vehicles, including one pickup van, which was carrying policemen.

MAYHEM ON MIRPUR ROAD

Students of different colleges including Dhaka College, Eden College, Teachers' Training College, Dhaka Imperial College and Dhaka City College as well as workers of different road side shops and tokais took position on the Mirpur road from Azimpur intersection to Dhanmondi-5 since 9:30am.

They also barred movement of vehicles. The agitating students set fire to the road, vandalised around 20 vehicles till 11:00am and held series of rallies.

At the rallies, they demanded immediate resignation of both the chiefs of the caretaker government and the army.

No police presence was seen until 3:00pm.

As police took position at science laboratory intersection, science laboratory police box and Nikhet intersection, the students engaged into sporadic clashes with them.

The agitating mob set fire to the police box at science laboratory in the evening. Police and mob locked into battle leaving more than 20 injured.

Until filing of this report sporadic clashes were continuing.

Duta for lifting

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It also demanded withdrawal of the army camp from the campus by noon today. However, the process of withdrawing army from the campus began at 8:00pm yesterday.

The Dhaka University (DU) Syndicate in a meeting last night decided not to allow police inside the campus without prior permission of the university authorities.

The Syndicate also condemned the army and police actions on the students yesterday and on Monday night.

The syndicate also endorsed some of the resolutions adopted at the meeting of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta).

Malaysia

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Daily Star over telephone yesterday.

He said two recruiting agencies--Akbar Enterprise and Enam International-- sent 70 workers to Malaysia assuring them of employing in an electronics factory at Johor Baru.

"Only six of them were given jobs in a wood-cutting mill in Kuala Lumpur and six others managed to escape. But the others have been left unemployed," Anis said adding some of them have started eating stuffs of the dustbins.

He said they filed a complaint against K-Poly Recycling Industries and sent a copy to Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur. "But no action has been taken yet," Anis added.

The workers were earlier kept in three different houses, but they are now residing at Room-16, Jalan Kempas-4, Taman Megah Ria-81750, Masai at Johor Baru.

Each of the workers paid around Tk 2 to 2.5 lakh for migrating to Malaysia.

Owner of K-Poly Recycling Industries said he did not hire the workers.

Mohammed Enamul Hoque, proprietor of Enam International, said Akbar Enterprise and his company sent 100 workers on July 4 and only 27 of them were unemployed for a few days, as K-Poly Recycling Industries denied employing them on their arrival.

"We however later managed jobs for them and now there is no problem. Akbar Hussain of Akbar Enterprise went to Malaysia recently in this regard," he said.

Iran, IAEA seek accord in nuclear talks

AFP, Tehran

Iran and the UN atomic energy agency were holding a second day of talks on Tuesday aimed at easing concerns over the Iranian nuclear drive, following a renewed warning over Tehran's future cooperation.

An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) delegation led by deputy director general Olli Heinonen started a new session of talks with Iranian national security official Javad Vaiedi, Iranian media reported.

The talks, which opened on Monday, are aimed at agreeing a plan that would foresee easier inspections of Iranian nuclear plants by IAEA inspectors and Iran giving information about aspects of its atomic drive that have concerned the agency.

No information has emerged over the first day of talks and it was not confirmed whether the pair would be holding a press conference later Tuesday to explain the results of their talks.

Vaiedi and Heinonen, who is in charge of inspections at the IAEA, have already held two previous rounds of talks in Tehran and Vienna, but this week's session is billed as the final discussion.

Iran hopes these discussions with the IAEA over improving cooperation will encourage Western powers to drop their threats to impose a third set of UN sanctions over its nuclear programme.

After the first day of talks, Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Larjani issued a warning that the future of such discussions and Iran's cooperation with the agency would be in danger if sanctions were imposed.

"If they (world powers) take an irrational move, then Iran's cooperation with the agency as well as the talks will be sterile," Larjani said late on Monday, according to the official IRNA news agency.

"If they take the wrong path this will arouse a reaction from Iran. The path taken so far will end and Iran will take its next steps," Larjani warned.

The IAEA has been conducting an investigation into the Iranian nuclear programme for more than four years, but is still unable to make any firm conclusion over its nature.

The United States accuses Iran -- Opec's number two oil producer and owner of the second largest proven gas reserves in the world -- of seeking to make nuclear weapons under the guise of a civilian energy drive.

Iran, however, insists that the nuclear programme is entirely peaceful and its growing population needs electricity from atomic energy, especially when the fossil fuels start to run dry.

The biggest success in the previous two rounds of talks was an agreement for IAEA inspectors to visit the Arak heavy water reactor on July 30 after being held up for several weeks.

The deputy head of Iran's atomic energy organisation Mohammad Saeedi said he expected that IAEA chief Mohammad ElBaradei would take account of Iran "cooperation" in his next report on Iran in two weeks.

However, the central demand of world powers remains that Iran suspend its uranium enrichment activities, which they fear could be diverted to make nuclear weapons.

Enrichment has always been the key sticking point in attempts to break the deadlock between Iran and the West over the crisis.

The process is used to make the nuclear fuel for power stations, but in highly enriched form the uranium can be used to make the explosive war-head of a nuclear bomb.

Iran has repeatedly refused to suspend enrichment, arguing that it has every right to the full nuclear fuel cycle under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The UN Security Council has punished Tehran's defiance with two sets of sanctions.

Three of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council -- the United States, France and Britain -- are in favour of debating further sanctions moves, while Russia and China are more hesitant.

HC on emergency

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case against him under the EPR framed under the Emergency Powers Ordinance, 2007.

The petitioner said the charges against him were brought in April this year, whereas the incident described in the case occurred months before the president declared the state of emergency on January 11.

According to an official handout issued on January 26, the rules effective from January 12 will continue through the spell of emergency.

After primary hearing on August 14, the bench asked the petitioner's counsel to inform it exactly where the rules have been misused and the constitutional provisions violated.

Major concern

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reports: Crops on 6,090 hectares of land worth around Tk 17 crore were damaged in the floods, according to district agriculture extension department.

"We supplied Amon seedlings to 100 peasants of three upazilas free of cost, so that each farmer is able to transplant seedling on one bigha of land," said Abdul Matin, deputy director of agriculture extension department, Gaibandha.

Besides, seedlings on 13 acres of land are being grown for distribution among the flood-ravaged farmers, free of cost, to help them overcome the crop damage, he added.

Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) and disease control sources said intensity of both the flood and the spread of diarrhoea are diminishing to some extent all over the country.

"The very active monsoon has become weaker and the Brahmaputra basin is likely to be free from flooding within a few days," FFWC sources said adding that the flood situation in Bangladesh is likely to improve from tomorrow and it would not deteriorate further.

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

Small rivers surrounding Dhaka and Narayanganj saw a fall in their water levels. The rivers are expected to recede further in the next 24-72 hours. Flood situation around Dhaka city especially in the eastern part of Dhaka is likely to improve in the next 24-72 hours.

Meanwhile, the Padma may continue to rise but at a slower rate in the next 24-72 hours. The Padma at Goalundo and Bhagaykul receded and is likely to remain steady.

The International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) had fewer patients than those of previous days, even though 3,871 patients were admitted to different hospitals across the country yesterday taking the total number to 68,862 since July 30.

Shahadat Hossain, scientist and head of Longer Stay Unit of ICDDR,B told The Daily Star, "As the government has started to provide services to the diarrhoea patients at different public medical colleges and hospitals, the ICDDR,B received 767 patients in 24 hours ending at 6:00pm yesterday." He said it is yet to be determined how much progress has been achieved.

Two diarrhoea patients arrived dead at the ICDDR,B yesterday, he said adding that their lives could have been saved if they were brought in even half-an-hour earlier.

Health Adviser Maj Gen (retd) ASM Matiur Rahman handed over some emergency medicines including oral saline and water purifying tablets to the Executive Director of ICDDR,B Alejandro Cravioto yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services control room, 25 people drowned yesterday. Since July 30, a total of 615 people have died due to flood-related reasons and 543 of them drowned.

A total of ten people died of diarrhoea since July 30. The number of respiratory tract infections (RTI) stands at 17,310 with 13 deaths while around 1,250 people were newly infected with RTI yesterday.

The number of skin disease infected people stands at 17,626 and with 1,579 new infections yesterday. Around 640 were newly infected with conjunctivitis and six suffered snakebites.

11 injured

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the second year students each as development fee.

The students ransacked two university buses during the clashes and gave the university authorities a 24-hour ultimatum to withdraw the decision.

They also threatened to enforce an indefinite strike at the university if their demand was not met within the deadline.

The injured students were admitted to a clinic.

Incidents

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government advocate Sultana Kamal, however, lauded the decision of relocating the army camp from the campus and the government's apology for the incident.

The authorities at this point should take appropriate measures to stop the clashes and bring back academic environment through negotiations.

"I also appeal to the students not to destroy public properties and look after themselves so that their academic activities are not hampered," she said.

Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, eminent author and a teacher at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, said such an incident would not have erupted if the army had a little more respect for the university students.

Assaulting students cannot solve the problem, he said, adding that the authorities should take immediate and appropriate measures to stop the violence quickly to avert further consequences.

Major Gen (retd) SM Ibrahim linked the clash to a storm in a teacup. It is highly regrettable that the incident had to happen between soldiers and students, he said.

"This demonstrates the inadequacy in education of the soldiers about the environment and the sensitivity of Dhaka University and its students, and lack of appreciation of the students about the sensitivity of soldiers who have been working so hard for the last eight months within their visibility and knowledge," he said.

The situation arising out of the confrontation between soldiers and students was taken over by the police, which was the right step, but subsequent actions of the police were possibly little beyond expected limit, he said.

"I appeal to all corners for demonstrating cool, calm and patience. I will urge upon all corners to restrain violence," Ibrahim said, adding that burning vehicles and destroying properties cannot be expected from a respectable society for obtaining justice.

The visit to the university and the hospital by the Chief of the General Staff of the Army Major Gen Sina Ibne Jamali was a welcome step, he added.

"Disciplining and affection must go hand in hand. Situation must not be allowed to aggravate, because the government and the joint forces have enough on their plates; they do not need more worry," he said.

Judge refuses

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and we came to know today [Tuesday] that he refused to try the case," he said yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star, Judge Jahangir Alam Mollah said he declined to try the case as he felt that providing justice in this case would not be possible for him.

"I will not talk about any pressure... so far I have been working with honesty... I do not want to get involved in any dispute or be harassed at this moment," Mollah said.

At least 26 witnesses, out of over 60 have provided their accounts since the trial of the case began in the tribunal on July 3. The charges were framed on June 18.

Police submitted charge sheet of the case on March 18 accusing six people including two suspected masterminds--RU Prof Mia Muhammad Mohiuddin and former RU Shibir president Mahbubul Alam Salehi. The other accused are Jahangir, Salam, Nazmul and Azimuddin Munshi.

According to the prosecution, Mohiuddin and Salehi masterminded the killing of Prof S Taher Ahmed hiring killers promising them jobs in the university.

Three accused in their judicial confessional statements said that Salehi, pressing a pillow over Taher's head, confirmed the death and later with Mohiuddin celebrated by sitting on Taher's body.

Mohiuddin allegedly masterminded the murder apprehending damage to his teaching career by Taher who allegedly detected plagiarism and piracy in Mohiuddin's 10 out of 11 research papers submitted with his promotion prayer.

Withdrawal

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Meantime, the army person responsible for Monday's soccer match incident was withdrawn from the army camp on the DU campus yesterday, and an investigation against him has begun, said an ISPR press release.

In the wake of violence on the DU campus, the chief adviser initiated the move to defuse the tense situation on campuses and discussed the overall situation at the meeting he chaired.

The meeting was attended by advisers concerned, the army chief, home secretary, pro-vice chancellor of the DU, chiefs of law enforcement agencies and senior civil and military officials.

Following directives from the CA's office, the home ministry initiated formation of a judicial body to investigate the DU incidents.

"We are going to send a proposal to the office of the chief adviser for his approval to form a judicial probe body," a senior official of the ministry told The Daily Star last night.

The process was supposed to be completed by last night so that the law ministry can issue a gazette notification on the formation of the probe body.

"We are proposing formation of a one-member probe body comprising a Supreme Court judge or a district judge. The government will take the decision regarding this," the official said.

The law ministry will finalise terms of reference of the probe body, he added.

Moeen blames

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bankers can't avoid their responsibilities," he said adding that a banker even told his client, "I will disclose how much you have in the locker... I will say you have two crore taka in the locker."

"It's nothing but blackmailing," Moeen said.

Referring to the ongoing flood and its impact on the economy, the army chief asked the bankers to refrain from creating any more panic among their clients and to stand beside the people.

Moeen U Ahmed said the government decided to form a committee to monitor every level of the administration during the post flood infrastructure development activities.

The committee, which is being formed, will be comprised of civil society members, law enforcers, media personalities, and local elites, he said.

The army chief said the flood damaged more of the infrastructure than of the agriculture.

Citing experiences of previous governments he said hardly a third of the money for relief used to be spent in post flood reconstructions, and the rest of it used to be pocketed by different groups.

"If the damage was worth 1 crore taka, previously 4 crore taka used to be allotted for rehabilitation, the remaining 3 crore of which would be pocketed," he said adding that such misuse of money will not happen during the tenure of the present government.

"Whatever the present government will do in post flood infrastructure development, will be documented," he said.

He thanked the bankers for donating money for the flood victims and assured that whatever money have been contributed, will be utilized properly.

"There was corruption in relief distribution during previous regimes. But we have ensured so far what has

AL mourns

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told reporters after placing wreaths in the morning along with other AL leaders at a temporary memorial plaque on Bangabandhu Avenue where the attack took place.

The AL acting president also urged the caretaker government to mete out immediate punishment to the culprits through a proper investigation.

The grisly attack that took place in 2004 killed 24 AL leaders and activists including its women affairs secretary Ivy Rahman and wounded around 500. Many of the injured are maimed and are living a painful life with hundreds of splinters in their bodies.

AL leaders Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury, Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser, Mukul Bose, Abdul Mannan, Sultan Mohammad Mansur, Abdur Rahman, Mustafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Abdus Shahid, Shahara Khatun, Kamrul Islam, Maj Gen (retd) Subid Ali Bhuiyan, Latif Siddequi, Habibur Rahman Seraj, Nazma Rahman, Abu Sayeed, Nurul Islam Nahid, Yafes Osman, Dipu Moni and Hasan Mahmud were present.

Leaders of Workers Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Sammilito Sangskritik Jote, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote and many other organisations also placed wreaths at the temporary memorial.

Relatives of the victims and some of those injured in the attack were also present.

National and party flags were kept at half-mast.

The participants, wearing black badges, offered prayers for those killed in the attack.

Police, riot police and Rab personnel were deployed outside Bangabandhu Avenue to avoid any untoward situation.

been done by the present government in relief distribution, has gone to the flood victims."

Prices of vegetables on local markets have been spiralling upward due to a lack of proper distribution channels, he said. Citing an example he said while a vegetable item sells for 5 taka per kg in Norshingdi, it sells for 25 taka at Dhaka New Market.

Prices of vegetables have been going up in the capital because the produce reaches Dhaka after changing at least eight hands, the general added.

He urged the bankers to provide loans to small importers of essential goods so that the monopoly of big syndicates can be broken.

Replying to a banker's query about establishing a flyover in Dhaka city to ease traffic, Moeen said he personally requested the communication adviser to build a flyover system in the capital.

"I know a flyover system will be a great contribution to the nation if the present government is able to start the work."

Citing an example, he said 15 years ago a foreign company proposed to establish a flyover in Dhaka and verbally sent the proposal to the minister concerned, but interestingly that minister asked the company what types of personal benefits he would get from the company. When the company tried to get the minister's final nod, the minister demanded 15 percent of the total project budget as a bribe. Meanwhile, the company went back, because they were not accustomed to bribing, he said.

Iran frees US-Iranian scholar

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday released on bail US-Iranian academic Haleh Esfandiari, whose detention for the past three months on security charges further inflamed tensions with arch enemy the United States.

"I can confirm that she was released on a bail of three billion rials (320,000 dollars)," her lawyer Shirin Ebad, the Nobel peace prize-winning rights activist, told AFP.

The move was welcomed as "encouraging news" by the White House, which had repeatedly called for the release of Esfandiari and three other US-Iranians held by Tehran.

Iranian judiciary officials declined to comment on the case of Kian Tajbakhsh, a US-Iranian urban planning expert who has also been held in Tehran's Evin prison on the same charges as Esfandiari since May.

However the ISNA news agency cited a source in the Tehran prosecution office as saying: "Possibly his (Tajbakhsh's) situation will change in the next few days."

The arrests had increased tensions between Tehran and Washington at a time of growing concerns about the Iranian nuclear drive, which the United States claims is aimed at making an atomic weapon.

"This is encouraging news and the United States welcomes this," US National Security Council spokesman Gordon Johndroe said in reaction to Esfandiari's release.

Tehran's deputy prosecutor Hassan Hadad emphasised that the investigation into Esfandiari and Tajbakhsh was not over, although no indictment had been issued.

"The preliminary investigation has not finished yet and the inspector is carrying out more work," he told the Mehr news agency.

Iraq starts trial

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offensive just inside Iraq.

Saddam's forces used helicopter gunships -- reportedly after US generals relaxed no-fly rules -- and tanks to defeat the rebels, and estimates suggest that between 60,000 and 100,000 Shias were slaughtered.

Shias, a minority in the Muslim world, make up 60 percent of Iraq's population and were ruled for decades by Saddam's Sunni-led regime.

Since the 2003 US-led invasion, Iraqi and international experts have exhumed dozens of mass graves of victims killed in the uprising, and their reports are expected to be the key evidence during the trial.

Officials say approximately 90 victims and witnesses are expected to testify against the 15 defendants.

They said the evidence also includes tapes and after-action reports but few actual orders because of a regime-ordered destruction of records.

Majid is the most high-profile defendant.

Sultan Hashim al-Tai, a former defence minister, and Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti, ex-armed forces deputy chief of operations, have also been sentenced to death in the