



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presides over a meeting of the ministers and Awami League presidium members on the BDR mutiny issue at her official residence in the city yesterday.

Hectic govt efforts for peaceful end to BDR mutiny

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government made hectic efforts for the second day yesterday in search for a peaceful ending to the mutiny at the BDR headquarters.

Meetings within the government and negotiations with the mutineers were held throughout the day.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina convened an emergency meeting of senior ministers and Awami League presidium members at her official residence Jamuna in the morning to discuss the crisis and find its solution.

The decision of the televised address to the nation came out of the meeting where she urged the BDR mutineers to go back to barracks after surrendering their arms, otherwise she warned of any action in the interest of the country.

After the meeting, Hasina also held talks with the chiefs of three services. A number of ministers and lawmakers also visited BDR headquarters at

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Residents of different halls of Dhaka University were seen leaving the dormitories with their belongings yesterday as panic prevailed on the campus due to the BDR mutiny in the nearby Pilkhana area.

However, many students were confused because they didn't receive any distinct order from the hall authorities to vacate the halls.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said that they did not get any official order to evacuate the dormitories till yesterday evening.

Swarna, a student of Fine Arts Faculty, told The Daily Star that she was leaving the campus since it seemed to her that the situation had gone out of control. She saw on the television that people living in the neighbourhoods are leaving for safer places.

Some students staged demonstrations demanding an end to all these bloodshed.

Few departments took classes in the morning but most of the departments had no classes or academic activities.

The few students who came to the campus in the morning left in the first hours.

The examinations scheduled for Saturday have been deferred. Fresh dates would be announced soon, sources said.

Pilkhana and talked to the mutineers in a bid to resolve the crisis.

After holding talks with mutinous BDR jawans, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury said the jawans agreed to surrender their arms by 2:00pm if army officials are withdrawn from all the BDR posts across the country.

The minister also urged the BDR soldiers at different camps across the country to stay calm and collected.

Matia led a government delegation that arrived at the BDR Gate No 4 at Pilkhana at around 8:35am for further negotiations with the mutineers. Later, they sat with a 10-member delegation of insur-

gent BDR jawans at Ambala Inn and completed the meeting successfully at around 11:30am.

The government delegation also includes State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam, State Minister for LGRD Jahangir Kabir Nanak, barrister Fazle Noor Taposh MP and Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad.

During the meeting, the rebellious jawans reportedly accepted the leadership of BDR Deputy Assistant Director Touhid.

The government also formed a 'law and order coordination committee' to coordinate the law and order situation across the country after the mutiny. Joint secretary (politi-

cal) of the home ministry is supervising the activities of the committee. He is assisted by deputy secretary (administration) and deputy secretary (political). Apart from the three senior officials, 23 other officers are carrying out the activities of the committee.

A committee headed by Home Minister Sahara Khatun was also formed yesterday to meet demands of the mutineers.

Earlier on Wednesday, Hasina granted a general amnesty for the mutineers and called a halt to the crisis that developed after the fierce battle at BDR headquarters leaving a number of soldiers and officers killed.

BAF denies firing from chopper

UNB, Dhaka

The Air Force Headquarters denied media reports that shots were fired from its helicopter on the rebel BDR members during mutiny at the BDR headquarters in the capital on Wednesday.

Some newspapers yesterday published reports that an air force helicopter hovered over and fired shots on the rebels.

"Attention of the air force headquarters was drawn to the news item published by different newspapers Thursday," an Inter-service Public Relations (ISPR) release said.

Refuting the report, the release said that the helicopter of the air force watched the situation from certain distance and leaflets containing government directive were airdropped during the mutiny at the BDR headquarters Wednesday.

"No fire was shot from the helicopter," the release added.

Three writers receive Bangla Academy awards

AMENA KHATUN

Three renowned writers were awarded Bangla Academy Sahitya Purashkar 2008 at a ceremony on the Bangla Academy premises, the venue of Amar Ekushey Book Fair, in the city yesterday.

The winners are poet Mahub Sadik (poetry), Prof Karunamoy Goshawami (prose and research) and Helena Khan (child literature).

National Professor Kabir Chowdhury, newly appointed chairman of The Bangla Academy, gave away the awards to the winners at a brief ceremony at the Mela Mancha. Each award carries Tk 1 lakh, a crest and a citation.

Meanwhile, the number of visitors at the book fair was small yesterday, the 26th day of the fair, as the nation was worried about the mutiny by BDR jawans. Over one hundred book stalls have been closed until the evening.

A total of ten books were unveiled at the book fair yesterday.

Besides, a total of 90 new titles arrived at the fair yesterday. The books included 'Baishwik Pujibader Sampratik Sankat' by MM Akash, Anu Muhammad and Faruk Chowdhury; 'Face Book' by Mahub Hasan; 'Radharaman Gan' by Tapan Bagchi; 'Khandaker Juddho Onnanya' by Salma Chowdhury; 'Brikha O Balika Galpo' by Dwijen Sharma; 'Anatikranta Brittaya' by Sirajul Islam Chowdhury; 'Nemesis' by Nurul Momen; and 'Muhammad Shafi: Jiban Karma O Sahitya Abodan' by Bishwajit Ghosh.

The book fair will remain open from 11:00am to 3:00pm only for children today and adults would be allowed to enter after 3:00pm.

There was a proposal from the publishers that the time of the fair be extended up to March 7, but the authorities ruled out the possibility of time extension.

Concern over BDR mutiny

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political and professional organisations yesterday expressed deep concern about the sanguinary revolt of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) jawans at BDR headquarters in the city on Wednesday.

Political leaders called for a peaceful resolution of the hostage crisis, saying that the government move to call for a halt to the hostilities is laudable.

Jatiya Party (Manju) Secretary General Sheikh Shahidul Islam urged the soldiers and BDR jawans to exercise considerable restraint and show respect to one another.

The violent incident will have a negative impact on the country's financial situation and national security, he said in a statement.

National Awami Party (NAP-Bhashami) leaders lauded the effective role of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to grant a general amnesty for the mutinous jawans and urged them to go back to barracks in order to restore peace.

Krishak Sramik Janata League leaders said

the BDR revolt might be another plot to spoil the democratic atmosphere in the country.

Holding a national dialogue is necessary to resolve the matter, they said, adding that the promises made to the BDR jawans by Hasina should be met.

ASM Abdur Rab said the prevailing crisis between BDR personnel and army men should be resolved with patience as well as national unity in the interest of the country.

Leaders of Socialist Party of Bangladesh in a statement said violence cannot be an answer to restore peace. The situation should be resolved peacefully through cordial talks.

Communist Party of Bangladesh leaders said the origin of the violence should be exposed through proper investigation.

Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh also expressed deep concern for the surprising turn of events and urged the government to relieve the BDR jawans of discriminatory treatments.

National Front of Teachers and Employees hailed the prime minister's address to the nation in the wake of the BDR rebellion.



Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali speaks at a national policy review consultation on 'Achieving millennium development goals: The role of parliamentarians' at a city hotel yesterday. Renowned economists Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud and Dr Atiur Rahman were also present.

REAPPOINTMENT OF 10 ADDL JUDGES Verdict on leave to appeal on Monday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) will deliver the judgement on Monday on the leave to appeal filed by 29 sitting High Court judges against the HC verdict directing the government to reappoint 10 additional judges with seniority.

The appointment of 10 additional judges was not confirmed during the rule of BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

After hearing the appeal for seven days, a five member-full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin yesterday fixed March 2 as the date for delivering the verdict.

The apex court started hearing the appeal against the HC verdict on February 18.

On July 29 last year, the SC upon separate petitions filed by then caretaker government and 19 HC judges stayed the HC judgement and asked the

petitioners to file regular leave to appeals with the SC against the HC judgement.

Later, 10 other HC judges became party along with the 19 judges against the HC verdict.

On the first day of the hearing, Attorney General Mahubub Alam submitted a petition urging the SC not to proceed further with the pending appeals filed by Fakhruddin Ahmed-led caretaker government.



Fruit vendors occupy the divider of Fulbaria Road at Gulistan in the city, causing suffering to the road users. The picture was taken yesterday.

Know Bangladesh Better

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DRU picnic postponed

UNB, Dhaka

The annual picnic of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) scheduled for today has been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances.

DRU executive committee at an emergency meeting with its President Shamim Ahmad in the chair yesterday decided to postpone the picnic even having full preparation considering current situation in the country.

The picnic was scheduled to take place at Mansurabad picnic spot of Shripur upazila in Gazipur.

A fresh date will be announced soon, said a DRU press release.

Samorita Hospital

METRO DESK

Due to unavoidable circumstances all programmes of Silver Jubilee Celebration of Samorita Hospital Ltd scheduled to be held today has been postponed. Fresh programme will be announced later on, says a press release.

the pavilion

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