



Arms rattling, rumour, fear of operation grip DU campus

Varsity Correspondent

In the face of arms rattling by the rival student organisations to establish their control on the Dhaka University campus, the authorities are now under tremendous pressure to keep order and normalcy in different dormitories.

Campus sources said the cadres of the two main student bodies - ruling party-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and BNP-supported Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) have enriched their arsenal with sophisticated arms including AK-47 assault rifles to face each other.

BCL is out to keep their control while JCD will be allegedly trying to recapture the dormitories. As such, wild rumours of imminent clash are running high on the campus.

Fearing violent clashes during the exit of ruling Awami League from power, Vice Chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury cancelled his scheduled tour of London to attend a round-table conference organised by the University of Oxford.

Teachers of both the Blue and White Panels joined the debate on the campus situation as the Azad Chowdhury administration is planning to deploy private security men, an attempt which is vehemently opposed by White Panel teachers.

In a joint statement on Tuesday, 156 teachers of BNP and Jamaat-backed White Panel condemned and termed it as a ploy to prolong the occupation of the BCL-men. Leaders of left-leaning student organisations also condemned the initiative.

Hall sources said armed cadres tested their weapons by firing inside three halls - Surya Sen Hall, Jasimuddin Hall and Bangabandhu Hall - Monday night. BCL cadres blasted two bombs at Bangabandhu Hall when some JCD activists went to appear a viva voce for allotment of seats.

On Tuesday the JCD activists brought out procession on the campus and demonstrated before the VC office. The protesters also broke the window panes of the office.

In the last 10 days, two murders and several incidents of snatching and firing took place on the campus, despite the fact that the authorities geared up security measures on the campus.

The authorities earlier said they would deploy personnel of private security companies alongside the university's own guards to beef up security. Additional police have been deployed in front of seven male dormitories. To avoid untoward incident the authorities de-

cided to close the main entrances to the university after 11.00 pm.

In spite of all these arrangements, resident students said, firing gunshots is common in the dormitories and on the campus almost on every night these days.

A high official of the university said the authorities met with the law enforcing agencies and decided to take certain measures to contain violence. If needed, a combing operation will be done on the campus shortly, he added.

"Unfortunately, some people are deliberately spreading rumours creating panic among the students," the high official said.