

DU stuck in session jam for politics

600 exams deferred as indefinite student strike going on since Nov 20

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A whopping 600 deferred examinations at Dhaka University (DU) since the last week of October caused by political standoff on the campus is taking a toll on the students and dragging them into another spell of miserable session jams.

Around 32,000 students are assumed to be tangled up in the session jams while they are already about two years behind their age-

institute strike called by 14-party backed student bodies on November 20.

However, officials said, it cannot be predicted how many session jams are on their way as no one can be sure how long the impasse will last.

The DU could not reopen on October 29 after the scheduled Eid and Puja vacation due to the political impasse. This impasse now reached two months and shattered all academic activities including

tests for the 2006-2007 session.

Teachers and students of DU are sceptical about any improvement of the situation during the caretaker government's term as they had experienced similar turbulent situation during previous caretaker governments.

According to the proctor's office, at least 384 exams, including 200 under Arts and Social Sciences faculties and 173 under Science faculties have been deferred within October 29 and December 15.

in 2004-2005 and 20 days in 2005-2006 session.)

On November 20 this year, Chhatra Sangram Parishad (CSP), an alliance of seven 14-party backed student bodies, called an indefinite strike in DU protesting the pro-BNP student body Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal's (JCD) attack on its leaders and activists on the day.

Since the student strike was imposed, the authorities could not take effective measures to ensure a congenial atmosphere on the campus for the coexistence of all student bodies at residential dormitories. Besides, the major student organisations also seemed to be willing to continue the impasse, a number of students alleged.

The two feuding major student bodies continue to blame each other for the bombings and armed violence on the campus and term each other "criminals".

A number of CSP leaders alleged that the JCD activists have evicted the CSP activists from residential dormitories and they are not allowing any CSP allies to conduct any organisational activities there.

Prof AK Firoz said the administration is hoping to resolve the crisis by the first week of January so the authorities can resume academic activities by January 9 after the Eid-ul-Azha vacation.

"This January is a very crucial month for national politics. If the period, we can resolve the crisis among the student bodies soon. The academic activities can resume then and the examination controller's office will then be able to conduct the deferred examinations within the shortest possible time," Prof Firoz added.

Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz told The Daily Star that he observed that the situation became more complicated as the student bodies are rather loyal to their parent organisations instead of ensuring the university's interest.

The authorities were very clear to end to the standoff. But all of a sudden, a number of unexpected circumstances disrupted the effective administration has been working sincerely to break the standstill as soon as possible, hoped the VC

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Furthermore, over 200 examinations of Business Studies faculty and nine institutes of the university have been deferred during the same period, said office of the examination controllersources.

Prof AK Firoz Ahmed, proctor of DU, said master's and honours students in second, third and fourth year from all the faculties and institutes have been directly affected as their examinations are likely to be deferred due to the crisis.

"Our third year final exams began in the last week of September. Since then, the schedule has been changed three times, but we are yet to complete the exams," said a student of English department.

A fourth year student of Mass Communication and Journalism said their honours final examination was scheduled to begin from last week of October after being deferred for the third time. They are still uncertain when their exam will resume.

"Our master's exam began on October 14 and was supposed to end by December 4, but the impasse is lengthening our studies," said a student of Political Science.

Unscheduled closures cost the DU students at least 677 days in the last 16 academic sessions and 43 days in the current 2006-2007 session that began on July 1 this year.

Apart from about 90 days scheduled closures in an academic year, on average, the university remained closed for more than 44 days a year due to student strikes, hartals and other reasons.

The 1991-1992 academic session had 94 lost academic days, the highest so far while the lowest was 18 days in 1997-1998. The university remained closed for 35 days in 1998-1999 session for floods.

According to the proctor's office, DU academic days were suspended for 51 days in 1990-91 session, 94 days in 1991-92, 10 days in 1992-93, 22 days in 1993-94, 42 days in 1994-95, 55 days in 1995-96, 23 days in 1996-97, 18 days in 1997-98, 56 days in 1998-99, 23 days in 1999-2000, 22 days in 2000-2001, 69 days in 2001-2002, 72 days in 2002-2003, 19 days in 2003-2004, 74 days

DU session