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DEMAND FOR FREEING TEACHERS, STUDENT

Black flags hoisted on DU, RU campuses

Demonstrations on; classes boycotted

DU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday hoisted a black flag on the Arts Faculty building as an expression of their disappointment and resentment over the "unjustified" detention of four teachers and a student.

Students of Rajshahi University (RU) and family members of 10 RU students and an employee--convicted in the DGFI vehicle torching case--also hoisted black flags above all faculty buildings, demanding their release.

Meanwhile, students of Sirajganj University College and Mirpur Bangla College staged demonstrations yesterday to express solidarity with the movement of DU teachers and students.

DU students also continued their demonstration, demanding the release of the detained teachers and student within January 18 and withdrawal of all cases against them.

Hoisting the black flag around 11:40am, Prof Muhammad Akhtaruzzaman, former general secretary of DU Teachers' Association (Duta), said, "We are disappointed and resentful as our colleagues and a student have been detained unjustifiably."

A requisitioned emergency meeting of the Duta took the decision of hoisting a black flag on the campus on Wednesday night and keep it hoisted until the release of the detainees.

This is the first time that a black flag was hoisted on the campus.

Prof Akhtaruzzaman said, "The government is jeering at us as we have been non-violent, peaceful and obedient to law."

He said it seems that there is a vindictive section in the government, which wants the detained teachers and student to be punished.

If the government tries to repeat what happened in Rajshahi University, where teachers were punished in connection with campus violence in August last year, it will prove the government's reactionary character, he added.

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Black flags hoisted

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A number of teachers yesterday also wore black ribbons as part of their protest programme.

The Duta meeting had set a new deadline for the release of the detainees within January 23 and decided not to hold any admission test at the university until the arrested teachers and student are freed. The teachers also decided to observe a three-hour token hunger strike at the foot of Aparajeyo Bangla from 10:00am to 1:00pm on January 21.

STUDENTS DEMONSTRATION

DU students under the banner of "Students against Repression" yesterday staged a demonstration on the campus, boycotting classes from 11:00am to 1:00pm. They formed human chains, brought out silent processions and held a protest rally.

Three human chains were formed in front of the Arts Faculty building, Curzon Hall and Institute of Fine Arts around 12:00noon. Hundreds of students spontaneously participated in the programme.

Boycotting classes, the students kept the gates of Curzon Hall, Science Annex building and Institute of Education and Research under lock and key.

DU students had already set today as the deadline for the release of their teachers and fellow student.

Meanwhile, the students alleged that the university authorities cheated them by extending the usual one-day Ashura holiday by another day "to stall" the ongoing demonstrations on the campus.

But DU public relations department Director Ashraf Ali Khan said usually classes remain suspended for two days on the occasion of Ashura while administrative offices remain closed for one day.

The leaders of Students against Repression yesterday met Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz and demanded that as the guardian of the university he take his stand for the unconditional release of all the detainees by withdrawing the cases.

They warned of violating the Emergency Power Rules if the teachers and student are not released by today.

Later, talking to reporters, Prof Faiz said he is trying to get the detainees released immediately.

Meanwhile, a number of students of Mirpur Bangla College in the city yesterday alleged that a fellow student was intentionally implicated in a case in connection with the August violence after police arrested him.

Our RU correspondent adds: Students of Rajshahi University and Sirajganj University College observed yesterday as a "black day", demanding release of 10 fellow students and an employee convicted in a case filed for torching a vehicle of the DGFI last August when the campus was violent following DU incidents.

Several hundred students and family members of the 11 convicts brought out a procession on the campus in the morning, wearing black badges and holding black flags.

They boycotted classes for two hours and hoisted black flags at all faculty buildings.

The family members of the convicted students criticised the RU authorities for not taking any step for their release.

Our correspondent in Sirajganj reports: Around 200 students of Sirajganj University College formed a human chain on the campus, protesting arrest of the DU teachers and a student and demanding their unconditional release immediately.