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BDR gunfire sparks panic on DU campus

Female students evacuated from two halls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gunfire at BDR headquarters at Pilkhana in the city caused widespread panic among the students of nearby Dhaka University.

The campus became almost deserted by 12:00noon as students left the campus hurriedly feeling as if the gunfire broke out on the campus.

The Dhaka University authorities also evacuated about 850 female students from two dormitories -- Begum Fazilatunnessa Mujib Hall and Bangladesh Kuwait-Moitree Hall -- in New Market area, which are close to the BDR headquarters.

Classes were also suspended after 12:00noon as students started rushing out of the campus to move to safer places.

To protest the gunfire, leaders and activists of Chhatra League and left-leaning students' organisations brought out separate processions on the campus.

In other dormitories, students were glued to television channels for updated news about the situation.

Panic gripped students of Fazilatunnessa and Kuwait-Moitree halls soon after the gunfight started. They did not dare to come out of their dormitories as the hall authorities closed the main gate at around 10:15am. Students were also asked not to move freely on the upper floors.

Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique told reporters that the authorities have decided to evacuate the students from Fazilatunnessa and Kuwait-Moitree halls to ensure their security.

The female students were shifted to Rokeya Hall, Shamsunnahar Hall and to the building of Bangladesh Cadet Corps on the campus.

The process of shifting students started at around 6:00pm. They were brought to the main campus by the university's buses.

Tuli, a Masters student and resident of Fazilatunnessa Mujib Hall, was close to tears.

"It was horrible. All of us were brought down stairs together, and Tuli after she was shifted to Shamsunnahar Hall."

"Our parents were also scared. They kept on calling the girls all the day long," she added.

Earlier, DU vice chancellor, pro-vice chancellor and treasurer visited the two halls and asked the students not to get panicked and stay calm.

The Institute of Social Welfare and Research held its classes for about an hour in the morning but had to suspend the academic activities due to this dreadful fight in their nearabouts.

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main gate was closed, but some of them were seen jumping over the wall to move to a safer place.

DU authorities took the decision at an emergency meeting with Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique in the chair.

The meeting, held at the vice chancellor's office in the afternoon, also postponed all examinations scheduled for today at Arts Building and Curzon Hall.

Fresh date of the exams would be declared soon.

However, the schedule for the other examinations will remain unchanged.

Besides, the viva voce of D Unit admission test could not be held after 12:00noon.

Sources said Abbas Uddin and Jakir Hossain, employees of Fazilatunnessa Hall and Kuwait Moitree Hall, were injured as shells from the BDR Headquarters hit them in the morning.

They were shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.