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# CG found DU campus hot-spot in 2007

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The campus of Dhaka University, the highest citadel of learning and the hotbed of all democratic movements, appeared as the worst troubled spot for the present caretaker government in 2007, reports UNB.

The August movement that broke out from the campus and then spilled over to major educational institutions across the country was the first protest by students under the military-backed caretaker government since it took over on January 12, 2007.

The 3-day violent protests

sparked off on August 20 over a scuffle between some students and army personnel over watching a football match on the DU playground. The general students took to the streets beyond the campus in protest against the alleged beating of their fellowman.

At one stage of the agitation, general people, including hawkers, small traders and slum dwellers, joined the student protests, forcing the government to impose a curfew to contain the situation in Dhaka and other divisional towns.

Hundreds of students were injured

as police and army swooped on them during the 3-day demonstration. The authorities removed the army camp from the campus, responding to the demand of the agitating students.

The agitating people demanded punishment of the army personnel and withdrawal of the state of emergency.

Students of Rajshahi University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University and Jahangirnagar University along with students from many colleges expressed solidarity with the cause of the DU

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students.

On August 22, all the public universities were closed for sine die and the students were forced to leave the dormitories by 8pm on the day, putting the Dhaka University on a three-month unscheduled closure.

Four DU teachers and nine students were arrested in connection the demonstrations as such activities are banned under the Emergency Power Rules. The arrested teachers and students are now languishing in Dhaka Central Jail.

An arrested student got his leg fractured allegedly during his remand for interrogation.

Despite the university authorities' indifference to take steps for having the detained DU teachers and students released, Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) demanded their release and had chalked out an agitation programme in November to press their demand.

The government then promised that the detained teachers and students would be released just after Eid-ul-Azha. Now the government is being accused by the DUTA of breaking its promise.

Asked how he evaluates the August student movement on the campus and its consequences, acting Dean of Social Sciences Faculty, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique told UNB that the government should have handled the movement with much more care.

"Dhaka University is the heart of Bangladesh. The most talented students from across the country come here to study. And some of them later become its teachers. That's why it was expected that the government would handle the situation with much care," he said.

About the nation's expectation after the 1/11 political changeover, he said the government took over to strengthen the country's democratic foundation and that's why the people had accepted it.

"In the past, the teachers and students of the university were the main players in establishing democracy in the country. This time the DU teachers and students could have played the same role. But the situation has reached such a stage that the teachers and students are now suffering from a sense of insecurity on the campus," Prof Arefin said.

He said there is no rule in the world that the university students cannot raise their voice for meeting their demands within their own campus.