

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES DHAKA H 32.0/L 21.0

CHITTAGONG H 32.3/L 20.4

SYLHET H 31.5/L 19.4

RAJSHAHI H 35.8/L 19.7

KHULNA H 35.5/L 24.5

BARISAL H 32.6/L 23.5

RANGPUR H 31.0/L 21.5

COX'S BAZAR H 30.2/L 21.5

Rain or thunders over the six districts
Met Office. The

MASS MOLESTATION OF FEMALES ON PĀHELA BAISHAKH

Student organisations demand DU proctor's removal

People from different professions demonstrate at Shahbagh Police Station protesting cops' gross negligence on duty, demand immediate arrest of molesters; BNWLA urges home boss to execute HC directives to stop such violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leftist student organisations yesterday demanded removal of Dhaka University Proctor AM Amzad for negligence in duty in protecting females from group molestation during Pahela Baishakh celebrations, while people from different professions demonstrated at the gate of Shahbagh Police Station demanding immediate arrest of the molesters.

Holding a press conference at DU's Madhur Canteen, Progotishil Chhatra Jote and Samrazzabab Birodh Chhatra Oikya placed four other demands including punishment for molesters, laws to prevent sexual harassment at universities, and a national policy against sexual harassment.

Addressing the conference, Bangladesh Chhatra Union President Hasan Tarek said the CTV footage clearly has proved the occurrence of sexual harassment, but police still are denying it.

Meanwhile, a seven-member delegation, led by Chhatra Front President Rashed Shahriar of DU unit, submitted a memorandum to Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique with a

five-point demand, including removal of the proctor.

The demonstrators in front of Shahbagh Police Station protested cops' gross negligence in duty during the assault. Under the banner "women's mass rally against sexual assault", they urged women to join Pahela Baishakh celebrations every year as a symbol of resistance against sexual assault.

Three women who claimed to be sexually assaulted on DU campus in recent years also spoke at the protest.

Later, they submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister's Office seeking the premier's intervention to meet the demands.

Meanwhile, representatives of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) met State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan and urged him to execute the High Court's directives of 2006, 2009 and 2011 against sexual harassment, BNWLA's legal aid director Rehana Sultana told The Daily Star.

The directives include strengthening internal security on DU campus, forming a committee comprising senior proctorial body members to prevent crimes at DU, launching a round the

clock police hotline to receive complaints of sexual harassment as well as forming a committee of civil society members to monitor police activities, said Rehana Sultana.

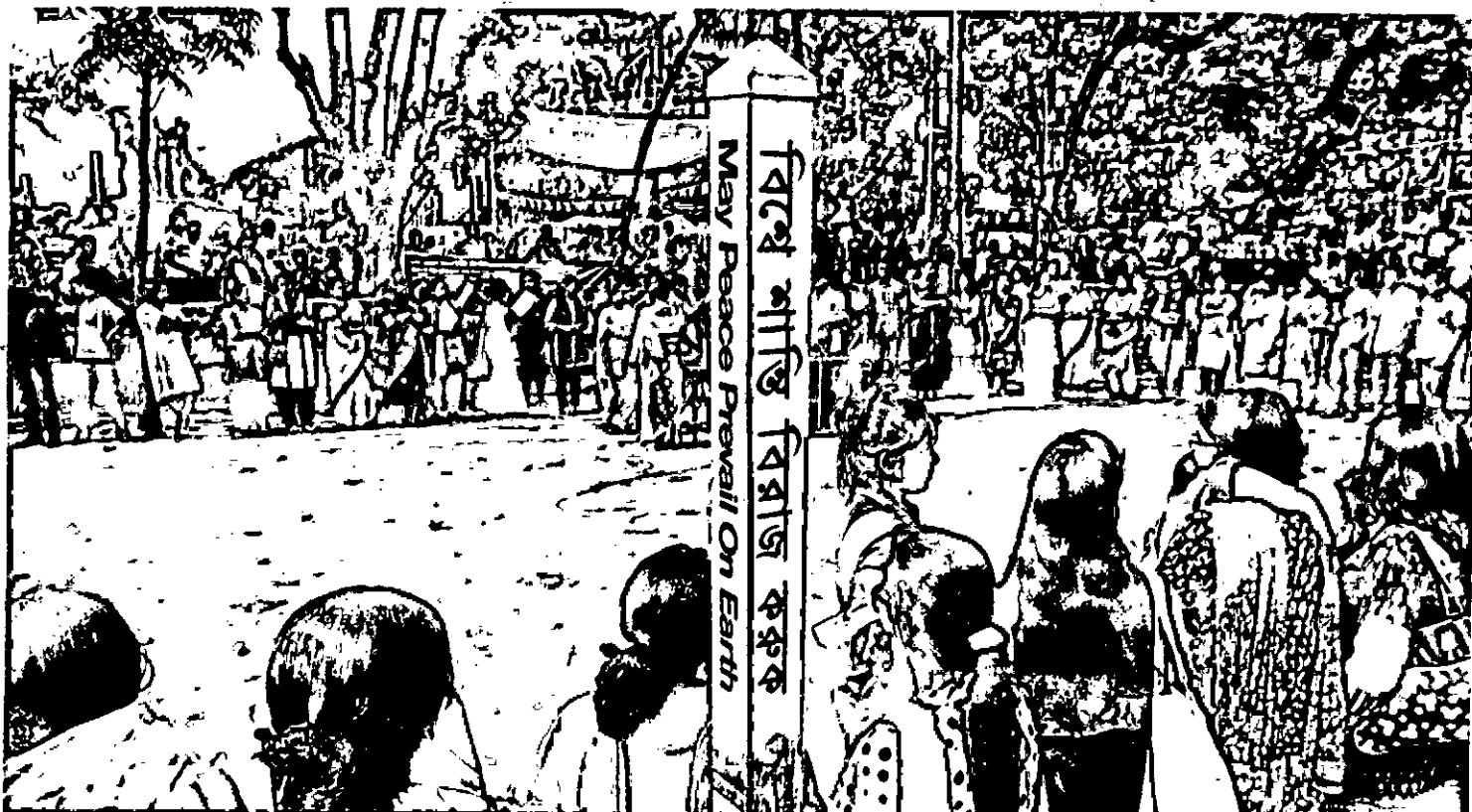
"Had the High Court directives been fully implemented, the molestation of females on Pahela Baishakh might not have taken place," she told The Daily Star.

Representatives from Samajik Protirodh Committee, a platform of 67 women and human rights organisations, also met the DU vice chancellor at the latter's office and requested him not to make any comments that may sway the investigation into the matter.

Fauzia Begum, Maleka Banu, and Zakia Hasan, among others, talked to the VC.

Asked about the progress of the investigation, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Joint Commissioner Monirul Islam told The Daily Star that police have talked to a number of witnesses but they could not arrest anyone.

Some 30 to 40 rowdy youths molested around 20 females for about an hour near the Suhrawardy Udyan gate on the campus on April 14.



A cross-section of people stages a protest in front of Teacher-Student Centre in Dhaka University yesterday over the sexual assault on some 20 females just yards away, in front of the Suhrawardy Udyan gate, during Pahela Baishakh celebrations on April 14.

PHOTO: STAR