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DU clarifies situation leading to closure

The Dhaka University authorities in a press release on Thursday clarified the situation under which they had to close the University since the on July 15. Following is the text of the press release:

After the June 25 clash between two groups of students, the University authorities had been continuing efforts to bring an end to the uneasy situation through the "Shikkhya Paribesh Parishad" (academic atmosphere council) formed earlier. On the other hand an Enquiry Committee formed by the Discipline Council to take administrative measures against possessors of arms on the basis of specific accusations was continuing its work even under such circumstances.

On July 14 night at about 12-30 a.m. the sound of a gunshot was heard and afterwards a student was found hurt and drenched in blood near the Surjasen Hall garage. Ambulance was called in. The Surjasen Hall Provost went there at that time and took the injured student to the Dhaka Medical

College Hospital. Doctors on duty declared the student dead. He was Abdul Wadud Halim, a student of 1st year (old) of History Department.

The spread of the news of Abdul Halim's death generated tension on the varsity campus that night and students supporting BNP brought out processions at Mohsin Hall, Surjasen Hall and Jashimuddin Hall areas. Tension mounted also at Fazlul Huq Hall and some rooms under possession of JSD (Inu) supported Chhatra League members were ransacked, the Hall Provosts informed the Vice-Chancellor over telephone. The Vice-Chancellor, the pro-Vice-Chancellor, the Proctor of the University, the Provost, the House Tutors of Surjasen Hall and some other teachers spent the rest of the night at the hospital and continued to calm the angry students. The situation became peaceful in the morning due to this.

The Vice-Chancellor held a meeting with Provosts and House Tutors of all halls, Deans of Faculties and office-bearers

of the Teachers' Association at 8-30 a.m. on July 15 to discuss the situation. Afterwards a meeting of the University Syndicate began at 11 a.m. with the Vice-Chancellor in the chair. When the meeting was on, it was gathered that some possessors of arms had attacked Salimullah Hall, and there were exchange of fire and bomb blasts. Earlier, sensing the development of such a situation the law enforcing agencies were contacted at 10 a.m. and police patrol in front of Salimullah Hall was requested, but police reached the place after the incident.

After some time it was heard that some persons were seriously wounded in Salimullah Hall too. One of the injured was immediately removed and admitted to the P. G. Hospital in a critical condition. He was Asad Ahmed Munna, a first year (Old) student of Geology. Munna received bullet injury in his head and is still in a very critical condition at P. G. Hospital.

The Syndicate formed an eight-member high-powered committee to probe the July 14

night incident at Surjasen Hall and the July 15 incident at Salimullah Hall, and asked the committee to submit its report without delay.

By July 15 afternoon the situation quickly deteriorated to such an extent that lives and properties of students, teachers, officers and employees on the campus were seriously threatened. The Syndicate decided to close the classes of the University for an indefinite period to protect lives and property. Under a warlike situation like that no other option was left for avoiding further loss of life. All examinations scheduled to be held in the University Campus were also suspended until further orders. Besides, in keeping with a Syndicate decision, students were given notice to leave the residential halls by 5 p.m. on July 15.

By 5 p.m. that day the resident students left the halls by putting their rooms under lock and key under supervision of their respective Provosts and House Tutors. No untoward incident took place on the campus since then.