

Unprecedented security at DU

By Our Staff Correspondent

After a gap of 68 days, the dormitories of Dhaka university were reopened on Tuesday for the university students amid unprecedented security measures.

At 9.30 am on Tuesday, the house tutors and provosts of the respective halls set up a make-shift counter at the entrances of the halls and asked the returning students to stand in a queue and checked and verified their identity cards and other papers.

The Hall authorities also searched the baggage of the students presumably to detect fire-arms or other lethal weapons, if any. As hall authorities were performing these functions armed police in full riot gear waited at the hall gates or in the guest rooms.

Never before in the recent history of Dhaka University did police take up positions inside the campus so peacefully without any protest from any quarters concerned.

On Tuesday, hardly 30 per cent of the students returned. Most of the general students are taking time to watch the situation. Right now, only the final-year honours and masters examinees are coming back. When the classes resume September 27, students of other years are expected back in the dormitories.

The hall authorities have decided to attend to the entry counters from 9.30 am to 10 pm upto October 6 to check on the returning students. They have also decided to rigorously enforce some rules like rollcall to ensure a peaceful atmosphere inside the halls. It has also been decided to enhance their routine strolls in the halls and to make some surprise visits to check any intrusion of non-students and unwanted elements into the halls.

It may be mentioned that the residential students were asked to vacate the halls in July following the sine die closure of the university after a series of gun battles between rival groups of students in which two students and a rickshaw-puller were killed.

Since the closure of the university, authorities showed a degree of commitment and conviction not to reopen the university until

they could ensure a situation in which further clashes could be prevented.

As direct step towards that, they set up an enquiry committee that submitted its recommendations to the Disciplinary Committee which subsequently, with the approval of the University Syndicate, issued expulsion notices to 19 students giving them a week's time to defend themselves.

It is learnt that some of these 19 students were not available at addresses they had given for the university records.

The university authorities, after considering the defence and the evidences against them, expelled 11 of them, suspended another for two years warned five and acquitted two others.

Prior to this, the Engineering University also took similar punitive measures against nine students on similar charges of creating violence and breaking academic discipline.

Of late, Rajshahi University authorities also, with the help of the students and other quarters concerned, took measures to make the university campus free of arms.

The situation indicates a positive trend in student politics. It seems that the university campuses may regain the congenial academic atmosphere which has been long absent there.

According to latest reports, no untoward incidents happened in the Dhaka University campus.

The university reopens at a time when the political atmosphere in the country is waiting to be charged by the opposition's "Dhaka Siege" program of November 10. It is likely that the situation may become tense in the university as well.

But both the political quarters and the political organisations seem to be behaving. Most of the political parties have remained silent above Dhaka University's decision regarding the unruly situation. This silence is being taken as their tacit approval of the university's steps.

Only one student organisation raised their feeble voice of protest against the university authority's decision, but failed to get the support of their political superiors.