

VC defends tuition fee rise DU students demonstrate, call strike today

By DU Correspondent

A chaotic situation prevailed at the Dhaka University yesterday as a section of general students and different student organisations brought out processions demanding withdrawal of the authorities' decision to raise tuition fees and other charges.

The 'general students', under the banner of a committee for resisting the increase, attacked the offices of the Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor and the Treasurer of the university and residence of the VC.

The resistance committee also called a two-day strike at the DU on July 26 and 27 to press home the demands.

Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikkya, an alliance of several left-leaning student organisations, had earlier called a strike at the university today on the same issue.

Witnesses said that the general students from different residential halls came out in processions and gathered at the Aparajeya Bangla at around noon.

The students paraded the campus in a single procession. At one stage, they tried to enter the administrative building but were obstructed by police.

The students then turned violent and threw brickbats at the offices of the VC, pro-VC and Treasurer in the administrative building, damaging window-panes.

The agitating students later went to the residence of the VC and tried to enter it. Obstructed by police, they threw brickbats at them. One of the demonstrators was injured there.

They also threw brickbats at the VC's residence. Then they returned to the Aparajeya Bangla, held a rally and announced the strike programme from the rally.

The GCO brought out a procession on the campus to drum up support for their strike.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of the BNP also extended support for the strike from a rally on the campus.

Bangladesh Chhatra Federation (BCF) 'gheraoed' the office of the VC in the morning de-

manding withdrawal of the decision to raise tuition fees.

Later in the evening, Vice Chancellor Prof A K Azad Chowdhury at a press conference at the administrative building condemned the attack on his office by students.

The VC justified the decision to raise tuition fees and other charges.

Under the new arrangement, a student will have to pay only Tk 40 more per month, he noted.

Students have every right to protest any decision of the authorities, the VC said. "But this is probably not the right way to register their protests. Any disagreement can be solved through discussion".

Pro-VC, Shahiduddin Ahmed, Treasurer Shamsul Haq and deans of different faculties also spoke at the press conference.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka University Teachers' Association condemned the 'attack' on the offices of the VC, Pro-VC and Treasurer.

In a statement, the DUTA president and general secretary urged all concerned to abstain from strike and other destructive activities for the sake of smooth academic activities.