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British HC on recent student unrest Initially it was spontaneous, later money was pumped in

British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury on Sunday observed the first few hours of recent student movement was genuine and spontaneous but afterwards it was coordinated and a lot of money was thrown into that, reports UNB.

"Our assessment is from what we have heard that it was initially spontaneous and then it was not. It became much more than the incident. It soon became something much bigger, something much sinister," he told reporters after attending a briefing for foreign diplomats on the current situation by Foreign Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury.

In support of his contention, he said the army camp was withdrawn in accordance with stu-

dents' demand, a retired High Court judge initiated judicial inquiry and the government perhaps apologized for the incident.

"Most neutral people could not understand why the escalation went into that dimension and that has caused a lot of question marks in the people," he told replying to a correspondent's query whether he felt it was a spontaneous student movement.

Chowdhury said, "We understood that it was a serious disturbance which has strategic consequences and we saw the government take quite concise and quite decisive action very quickly to try to bring the situation under control."

Asked if last week's agitation was a resentment against the gov-

ernment, the envoy said price hike is a problem and people do feel unhappy about that but there are a lot of new progress and good news which perhaps do not reach the press.

Chowdhury said he has heard that Rajshahi voters' list is going to be complete ahead of the time schedule and there are many progress on the roadmap for holding the election before December 2008 or hopefully earlier.

Asked about the detention of five university teachers, he said the matter was not raised at the briefing. He said it is a judicial process and they were told if people are found unconnected with it must be released but if they are connected in some way law will

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take its course.

About beating of journalists despite showing ID cards during the curfew hours, the High Commissioner said he is sorry to hear it and hoped the authorities will certainly look into it and take action.

On censorship on media, he said the country is under a state of emergency but the government has not imposed censorship in strict sense. In fact, he said, the press is free. There is a request for self-censorship as there is responsibility on all sides to lead the nation towards cherished goals.

Asked about the U.K. government's position on the whole situation, Chowdhury said U.K. has asked for calm on all sides, respect for human rights and "we will be pleased that government will not be detracted from the main goals of getting to the election."

The High Commissioner came up with a firm optimism that the country is going to have election as every major component of the government is saying that the election will be held before the end of December 2008.

"They are making a lot of progress on critical path, lot of reforms, but 18 months are a long time and you would expect some humps on the road."