



VC's resignation may bring life back to DU

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Hardly anyone would wonder whether the 'Mahabharata shall be incorrect', had Professor Anwarullah Chowdhury quit the post of Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University. The most amicable resolution to the university's present stalemate obviously lies with the fulfillment of the demand for resignation of the VC.

An equation of majority's grievance versus a sheer personal greed for power has posed a serious threat to the educational life of the nation's most meritorious daughters and sons in their hundreds. Playing with the fate of many by one could be a matter of joke only to an insane, nobody else.

The incumbent DU VC announced the closure of university for an indefinite period to quell an uprising of the students, not against the government or the state, but against him. To prolong his stay in the DU Vice Chancellor's luxurious residence at Fuller Road, he has waged a war against his students who do not want to see him as their guardian any longer.

The DU deadlock could cost the students six months of session

jam and only one person - the VC - is responsible for creating such a situation. History says, he will not be able to remain the VC in the face of the students' wrath. And the sooner he relinquishes office, the better the outcome the university is set to get.

How come Prof Chowdhury could undermine the massive students' demonstration on the campus that shows reminiscence of the glorious movements of the early 1950s and the late '60s and the late '80s and early '90s? He could not understand the dynamics of the latest wave of movement that came to a climax with the participation of general students.

The VC himself knew all the happenings and it is he who failed to handle the entire situation right from the beginning. If he did not know about the police raid on the Shamsunnahar Hall that sparked off widespread protests, he has neither any right nor the competence to cling to the prestigious post of the top administrator of the university.

If he feels that the derailed students have been agitating, it is

(See Page 15 Col. 6)

From Page 1 Col. 3

again his failure to teach them properly with a convincing approach. If he counts the demonstrators at only 2,000, the number is far bigger than his individual position. If he sees the garment workers on the campus among his girl students, his efficiency as an administrator anyway is proved to be inept, out and out. Even if he finds a conspiracy by vested quarters, it is his exit that could free the university from unruly elements.

The way Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury reacted to the decent way of showing dissent during the turbulence only implied his lack of prudence and wisdom to hold the chair of the country's oldest university that produced so many of scholars of excellence. Alas! It is a Vice Chancellor who used all the brutal means available against his students irrespective of boys and girls.

Now, he should not expect that the government would come to rescue him since he invited enough embarrassment for the political government too. The government could easily remove him, save its own face and appoint, no matter, a like-minded Vice-Chancellor from among a list of choices.

Ironically, the students' demonstration, led and widely participated by commoners, is against a VC, over a decade after the fall of autocrat Gen Ershad following the students-mass upheaval in 1990. Is it a fault of the students to protest police action in the autonomous institution and question the VC's role?

The ongoing movement also shows that the party-affiliated student politics lost its effectiveness at a time when the question of banning student politics is at the cards of the ruling party. If the government means dissociating the paternal parties' links with the student bodies, that will be a welcome gesture. A moratorium on the students' right to do politics would not make any sense because nobody will like to cede his/her natural right to demonstrate as it is seen in the current movement.