

Attacks on JU protesters condemnable

The VC's statement is shocking



We condemn in the strongest terms the attacks by the BCL activists on the peaceful protesters of Jahangirnagar University who have been demanding the VC's resignation over corruption allegations. Reportedly, around 150 Chhatra League leaders and activists assaulted the agitating students and teachers who had kept the VC confined to her residence to press home their demand. The attacks left at least 35 people, including nine teachers and four journalists, injured. What is most unfortunate is the statement that the JU VC gave after she came out of her residence under BCL's protection. Not only did she thank the BCL members but also rejoiced at the BCL-led attacks by saying that "they (the BCL

members) took the responsibility upon themselves and did it.” What is more, she termed the agitating students as Islami Chhatra Shibir activists, an old strategy taken particularly by the BCL for thwarting peaceful demonstrations.

Although confining a university VC to her residence may have been an extreme step taken by the protesters, the VC’s exulting at and taking delight in the violence perpetrated on the protesters by the BCL was not only uncalled for but also an indication of her blatant partisan position. The post of a university VC is not only an administrative one, she/he must play the role of a custodian of the highest seat of learning through taking a moral and ethical stand in times of crisis. But sadly, JU VC played a completely different role when it came to safeguarding the interest of the university as well as the students.

The situation has taken a turn for the worse since the authorities have shut down the university for an indefinite period and asked the students to vacate the residential halls. Such a decision is particularly inconsiderate for the female students who hail from distant districts of the country and have no other place to go on such short notice. Moreover, closing down the campus and halls cannot be a solution to the existing problem. As the students and teachers have been continuing with the protest, we are now worried about their safety.

Under the circumstances, a judicial inquiry must be held into the reported involvement of the university’s vice-chancellor in corruption and mismanagement of the campus development fund, as demanded by the protesters. Also, the BCL members who were involved in the heinous attacks should be brought to justice.