

# Cops harassing families of JU protesters

*Allege 10 students of the university*

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**JU Correspondent**

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Ten of the students agitating for the resignation of Jahangirnagar University's vice-chancellor over corruption allegation have alleged that police harassed their family members in their village homes.

They also alleged that police threatened their family members with dire consequences if the 10 did not stop joining the demonstration.

These 10 students are among the organisers of “Jahangirnagar Against Corruption”, a platform that launched the demo demanding VC Prof Farzana Islam steps down.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, one of the protesters, Hasan Jamil, office secretary of JU Chhatra Union, said two policemen went to their home in Tangail Sadar’s Akur Takur Para on Saturday.

“They went there twice. They were looking for me. They even announced my name with a loudspeaker of a nearby mosque,” he said. “My family members are now scared. My mother called me and asked me to go back home immediately.”

Hasan’s mother Ayesha Khatun told this newspaper that the policemen wanted to know whether they had any political affiliation.

“They even went to the homes of our neighbours and told them that my son was a Jamaat-Shibir activist. This allegation is absolutely false,” she said over phone.

Contacted, Mir Mosharaf Hossain, officer-in-charge of Tangail Sadar Police Station, denied police involvement in any harassment. “No one has harassed anyone,” he said.

Ariful Islam Anik, general secretary of the Chhatra Union unit, alleged his family members were harassed in a similar way in Kishoreganj.

“The policemen even told my parents that my academic life was at stake,” he said, adding, “Police have no right to harass anyone like this.”

The Daily Star tried but could not contact anyone from the local police station for comments.

Another organiser of the platform, Mushfiq Us Salehin, said some policemen asked his maternal grandfather to stop him from taking part in the demo. “All my relatives are now extremely worried.”

JU Chhatra Front President Mahathir Mohammad, Organising Secretary Shovon Rahman, Quota Reform Movement leaders Khan Muntasir Arman and Shakiluzzaman, and cultural activist Muzibul Haque Shishir are among the 10 students who raised the allegation against police.

Talking to this correspondent, they all alleged their family members were being harassed as they were staging the demo.

On Sunday, Bangladesh Chhatra Union in a press release protested the police “harassment”.

Prof Rayhan Rhyne, convener of the platform, suspected that the university administration might be linked to this.

Asked, JU acting proctor ASM Firoz-Ul Hasan, however, said they were not aware of anyone being harassed.

The university plunged into a crisis in the wake of the student protests in August demanding a judicial enquiry into the reported involvement of the vice-chancellor in corruption and mismanagement of a Tk 1,445-crore campus development project.

The two top leaders of central BCL -- the president and the general secretary -- were relieved of the posts after allegations surfaced that they demanded their “fair share” from the financial allocation for the development work.

The VC has always claimed she is not involved in any corruption or irregularities.

Recently, the authorities shut down the university for an indefinite period and banned rallies and processions on the campus until further notice.

Even after that, the protesters continued staging the demo, demanding the VC step down.