



PROF REZAUL KARIM

University teachers join hands for justice

Threaten tougher movement; so do students

DU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers from different public universities congregated on Rajshahi University campus yesterday, demanding justice for the murder of Prof AFM Rezaul Karim Siddiquee.

They threatened to continue a movement until justice is ensured.

"We don't want to hear clichés from the authorities concerned; rather we want justice for the murder of all university teachers. Otherwise teachers will go for tougher movement with the

general people," said Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed, president of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association (FBUTA).

He spoke at a rally organised by RU Teachers' Association (Ruta). Around 2,000 students participated in it.

Meanwhile, a platform of six left leaning student bodies, Progressive Student Alliance, demonstrated at Dhaka University, protesting recent disappearances and murders including that of the RU professor.

They also threatened to wage

tougher programmes with general students if justice was not delivered.

At RU, the FBUTA president said, "It has become a culture that law enforcement agencies and the home ministry would always pledge to ensure justice following any murder but justice would go to the back burner in most cases."

RU Vice Chancellor Prof Muhammad Mizanuddin said the murder was an attempt to destroy universities, the place of free-thinking.

Prof Maksud Kamal, secretary

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general of FBUTA, demanded speedy trial of the murder case, and requested prime minister's directives to law enforcement agencies to have the killers arrested quickly.

FBUTA will submit a memorandum to the home ministry tomorrow.

Prof Rezaul's daughter Rizwana Hasin Shotovi called for an end to the culture of impunity. "I said many things in the 11 days but I want to say only one thing -- justice for my father's killing," she said.

Rajshahi lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha, Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet) Teachers' Association President Prof Narendranath Mustafi, Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur Teachers' Association General Secretary Tabiur Rahman, and VC of Bangladesh Open University Prof Mukaddam Hossain also spoke.

The RU English department, where Prof Rezaul taught, has been abstaining from holding classes for the last 11 days and brought out a silent procession yesterday.

Ruta held a candle-light vigil in the evening.

Meanwhile, police claimed that a certain Islamist group orchestrated the killing and ideological differences were the reason behind the murder, reported our Rajshahi correspondent.

"The information police gathered so far reveals that there were more ideological, social and cultural differences than any personal enmity that motivated his killers," said Sardar Tomizuddin Ahmed, additional commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police.

"The killers also intended to let the society and the state know that they are active in the country," he said, without naming any outfit.

He said police identified some three killers and things would become clear when they are caught.

Another senior police official, seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star that police were looking for a student of the English department who had been missing from home for the last one and a half years.

Police claimed that they had interrogated his father and brother who said Shariful did not communicate with them.

Meanwhile, police are also interrogating three arrested persons in the murder case. They are Raihan Ali, the imam of Prof Rezaul's village mosque, and two Islami Chhatra Shibir men Khairul Islam and Hafizur Rahman.

Unknown assailants hacked Prof Rezaul to death near his house in Rajshahi city on April 23.

The Detective Branch of RMP is investigating the case.