

RU teachers manhandled by ruling party men

RU CORRESPONDENT

With Awami League (AL) lawmaker Omar Faruque Chowdhury allegedly threatening to get the Rajshahi University (RU) vice-chancellor (VC) sacked the day before, the ruling party's men yesterday shouted expletives at the VC and manhandled teachers demanding that people of their choosing be appointed in the RU administration.

AL Rajshahi city unit General Secretary Dablu Sarkar also demanded an explanation from VC Muhammad Mizanuddin "why he had insulted Omar".

Yesterday's entire incident took place in front of The Daily Star correspondent.

On Wednesday, Omar, allegedly becoming irate on being asked to meet later, barged into the VC's office, forcing postponement of a meeting, thumped a table, and shouted expletives, threatening to get the latter sacked.

Refuting the allegation, Omar later said he had gone there and only talked about lessening a fine the RU authorities imposed on a private medical college.

Dablu, accompanied by 30 others, pushed his way into the VC's office yesterday while the latter was holding a meeting with some 20 teachers including RU Pro-VC Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan, Registrar Entajul Haque, Rajshahi University Teachers Association (Ruta) General Secretary Rezaul Karim Badal, and Public Relations Administrator Elias Hossain.

They also shouted expletives at VC demanding that he appoint their chosen people as staff, just a day after local AL lawmaker Omar had hurled abuses at him over a fine on a pvt medical college

Dablu questioned why the VC had still not appointed their men.

"Rajshahi city Awami League president and general secretary will provide lists from which you must provide appointments," he added.

When the VC replied that appointments will follow the RU ordinance, the AL men initiated the verbal abuse.

Awami Swachhasebak League Rajshahi city unit General Secretary Zedu Sarkar then demanded that the VC specify a date for the appointment.

"If you go to the prime minister regarding this incident, I will also go to the prime minister," he told the VC, and reminded him to keep in mind that Awami League is in power.

When science faculty Dean Habibur Rahman asked AL Rajshahi city unit Vice-President Sahadat Hossain to check his behaviour, Dablu shoved him, calling him an "insolent child".

The violent behaviour was repeated with other teachers who protested, including RU Student Adviser Sadequ Arefin Matin, and Ruta President Ananda Kumar Saha.

The AL men left threatening to "halt

all activities on the campus for an indefinite period" if their demand was not met.

Afterwards, a faction of Bangladesh Chhatra League men led by RU unit President Mizanur Rahman Rana brought out a procession on the campus demanding that the VC be sacked.

Asked of his behaviour, Dablu completely denied having done so, saying it was "only a peaceful dialogue" over allegations that the VC was patronising Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP activists on the campus.

"We will reveal how the VC was patronising the BNP-Jamaat men through a press conference later," he added.

Omar could not be reached over the phone for comments.

The VC said he was lost for words to protest. "I must seek remedy from the chancellor and the government maintaining official procedures," he added.

Ruta and RU Deans Committee issued statements protesting the incidents in the last two days, with the former demanding that Omar be stripped of his membership in parliament, and the latter seeking the intervention of Chancellor Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid.

Similarly, Progressive Students Alliance of four leftist student bodies organised a rally demanding that the perpetrators be punished following an investigation.