

Pressure piles up on JU VC to quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jahangirnagar University authorities have taken no legal action in three days since Bangladesh Chhatra League men beat up cultural activists, injuring 15 of them, while they were protesting the student body's bullying activities on the campus Saturday.

In protest of the incident, about 500 agitating students and one hundred teachers formed a human chain before the VC's residence at about 11:00am yesterday and demanded arrest and expulsion of the Chhatra League workers from JU.

Under the banner of Shikkhak-Shikkharti Songhoti Mancha (platform for teachers-students solidarity), the protesters also demanded resignation of the VC for his alleged patronisation of the ruling party student body.

Meanwhile, more than three hundred pro-VC teachers and BCL activists held a counter human chain at the same place around 12:00pm, saying that the activities of the teachers who had been demanding the VC's removal were harmful for the university.

For the past several months, a faction of JU teachers has been staging demonstration on the campus, demanding the VC's resignation for "irregularities" in teachers' recruitment.

With the same demand, a massive torch-light procession was brought out on the campus around 8:00pm last night, which was participated by some 2,000 students and teachers.

Amid escalating tension at JU, the syndicate has restricted besieging programme in the residential area and in front of the administrative building. The agitating students and teachers refused to give up until the VC quits.

"We won't lay any siege but will continue

our demonstration staging sit-in before the vice-chancellor's house as long as he has not resigned", said Prof Nasim Akhter Hossain, convenor of the teachers-students platform.

The protesting students also expressed their fear of further attack from Chhatra League men, as the proctorial body asked them to stay in dormitories.

Sowmit Chandra Joydip, president of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, said the protesting students were staying out of their halls, horrified by Chhatra League's torture. "The students still have the fear of facing torture at halls, as the university administration did not take any action against them in the past".

Meanwhile, journalists received a text message from an anonymous cell phone on Sunday night, which said the VC would quit on his own, and Prof Abdul Bayes would take over.

JU Registrar Abu Bakar Siddique, however, ruled out the speculation, while Prof Abdul Bayes resigned as dean of Faculty of Business Studies on personal grounds Sunday night.

Expressing concern over the Chhatra League activists' attack on cultural activists at JU and protesting the incident, Sachetan Nagarik Committee, Savar, a unit of Transparency International Bangladesh, yesterday demanded trial and punishment of the attackers, says a press release.

Meanwhile, former students of JU will stage protest programmes, including human chain, procession, rally, poetry recital and music, before the National Museum at Shahbagh today with a number of demands, including resignation of the VC and legal action against the Chhatra League attackers alongside their expulsion from the university.