

MEETING ON BUET CRISIS

Pro-VC to be removed

Nahid assures teachers of withdrawing cases; classes to 'resume soon'; no decision on VC yet

WASIM BIN HABIB

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid late last night assured of withdrawing Buet Pro-VC Prof Habibur Rahman and the two cases filed against faculty members and students of the university.

The decision came in an emergency meeting held at the minister's

official residence on Minto Road from 11:15pm to 1:15am.

The decision on the VC, however, remains pending.

Emerging from the meeting the education minister told newsmen, "The pro-VC and the cases will be withdrawn within the earliest possible time and necessary steps would be taken through discussion on other

allegations brought by teachers."

He said actions would be taken if anyone was found guilty of any of the allegations. The minister also reiterated that he would do everything needed to bring back normalcy on the campus.

Asked about the VC issue, president

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of Buet Teachers' Association Mujibur Rahman said, "The education minister has assured of taking necessary steps regarding the VC and other allegations of irregularities in due time."

He said they appreciated the minister's move and would "soon" return to classes.

Asked when the classes might resume, he said it would take some time as there were some procedures to follow, including reorganising the academic calendar.

Apart from an 11-member delegation of the Buet Teachers' Association, Education Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury and University Grants Commission president AK Azad Chowdhury were present in the meeting.

Earlier in the evening, leader of the Buet Teachers' Association held a meeting with the education secretary at the latter's office. Meeting sources said the teachers were given some proposals there.

The association leaders conveyed the proposals to its general meeting that sat in the civil engineering building around 7:30pm.

Soon after the meeting ended around 10:35pm, the 11-member delegation of teachers led by the association's president Prof Mujibur Rahman and its general secretary Prof Ashraful Islam went to the education minister's official residence for further discussion.

On April 7, Buet Teachers' Association launched an agitation, including work abstention, bringing 16 allegations of corruption against VC Prof SM Nazrul Islam and Pro-VC Prof M Habibur Rahman. Students and staff of the university joined the agitation from mid-July.

Earlier yesterday, after no positive development, Buet students gathered in front of the university's council building around 11:00am after law enforcement agencies had barred them from entering the administrative building.

About an hour later, a few students and teachers observed "voluntary bloodshed", in which they drew blood from their bodies with syringes and stored it in two bottles. They later brought out a procession with the bottles and poured the blood on the staircases of the administrative building around 1:10pm.

The students also staged a sit-in at Palashi intersection around 1:30pm.

Around 3:30pm, they postponed their agitation until 11:00am today on assurance from the education secretary that no students would be harassed over the two cases filed Sunday night in connection with vandalism and stealing of files from the VC's and Pro-VC's offices.

The chief security officer filed cases with Shahbagh Police Station against 150 named and unnamed students and teachers.

Buet Teachers' Association at a press briefing in the civil engineering building around 1:30pm demanded immediate withdrawal of the cases, terming those false and a means to harass students and teachers.

Meanwhile, the academic council meeting on first-year admission was postponed yesterday as most of the teachers boycotted the meeting.

Since the agitation erupted in the university, teachers had been boycotting classes which led to an unexpected closure. After a 44-day break the university opened on August 25, but no classes has been held since.