NEW AGE

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AUW INVESTIGATION II

Univ's vision in question as founder criticised

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THE ability of the Asian University for Women to develop into a world-class university has been impeded by the role played by its founder Kamal Ahmad, according to former members of the university's US support foundation and senior academic staff at the university.

Although Kamal is widely applauded, even by those who criticise him, for his original vision and work in establishing the university, interviews with a wide number of people who have worked with him in the last six years suggest that in his roles as chief executive of the US support foundation and as acting vice-chancellor, he has caused the resignation of at least one acting woman vice-chancellor, the dismissal of another, and the resignation of other senior staff.

In addition, as a result of the peremptory manner in which Kamal dismissed Mary Sansalone, the third female vice-chancellor, the majority of the US support foundation board, which at that point was governing the Chittagong-

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based university, resigned. A significant section of the current international faculty are also concerned that Kamal has no experience that justifies his current appointment as acting vice-chancellor.

New Age sought a response both from Professor Sheikha Abdulla Al-Misnad, the chairperson of the university's newly established board of trustees, and Jack Meyer, the chairman of the university's US-based support foundation, but neither replied.

Kamal also gave no specific response to detailed questions but suggested in an e-mail that New Age was 'being fed concocted data' and that the questions he was asked 'mock[ed] any attempt at fair reporting.'

Despite criticisms Kamal

executive committee of the support foundation board on numerous occasions: at the university, this has had the effect of confusing university staff regarding who their "real boss" is: the CEO of the support foundation or the acting vice-chancellor.'

Such interference was the cause of the early departure of Hoon Eng Khoo, who had been appointed in September 2008 as acting vice-chancellor after the sudden departure of Nancy Dye, the university's first appointment.

Although the official reason for Hoon Eng's departure was her need to return to her tenured position at the National University of Singapore, a number of former US support foundation members

straw that broke the camel's back and that Hoon Eng told Kamal in an e-mail, 'No vice chancellor can run the university like this.'

Hoon Eng told New Age that she did not want to talk about the reasons for her resignation nor comment on any of her correspondence with the board of the US support foundation.

The difficulties that Hoon Eng faced are reflected in the concerns held by Paul Coleman who had taken up the position of chief information officer at the university in July 2009 nine months before she resigned.

'Mr Ahmad, whatever his due as the visionary founder of the institution, lacks the administrative skills and moral sensibility to run a liberal arts

'It was clear that Kamal cannot work with strong women,' one told New Age.

Another former US support foundation member said that although 'Kamal could at one moment be very diplomatic and charming, behind the scenes he undermined any assertive female leader at the university.'

'It is a sad and ironic thing,' this person added, 'that this institution is meant to be developing strong independently minded young woman leaders and yet, all that those students have seen is any strong independently minded female leader being undermined to the extent that she bears it no longer and resigns. So the wonderful vision is being undermined by actual

board of US support foun tion board was exhausted just trying to keep the pea between Mary and Kam [Ahmad],' one former US su port foundation member sai

Increasingly, members the board of the US supp foundation considered th Kamal had to go and in Ju 2011 appointed Sansalone vice-chancellor.

Just over a month later, ar the day after convening t Bangladesh board of adviser Kamal managed to get himse re-appointed vice-chancell of the university again an sent a letter to Sansalone di missing her.

As a result of this turn events, nine members of th board of the US support fou dation resigned although ne

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led alliance said it would extend all cooperation to the EC in using EVM in the next general elections while the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party-led alliance vowed to resist the move.

As for voters' role update, the election commissioner said he was satisfied with the progress of the update work across the country.

The EC began updating the electoral rolls on March 10 across the country in view of the next general elections.

ing rice and agriculture production is not only vital for the country but also contribute a lot to the human community.

Jose arrived in the country for a two-day visit after attending a five-day Senior Officers' Meeting of the 31st UN Food and Agriculture Organisation regional conference for Asia and the Pacific held at Vietnam's capital Hanoi on March 12.

Welcoming the FAO new director general to Bangla-

isty of foreign affairs Abul Kalam Azad, among others, were present on the occasion.

Agriculture secretary Manjur Hossain, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council executive chairman Wais Kabir, Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation chairman Nazrul Islam and other high officials of the ministry were also present.

The FAO DG will inaugurate the documentation centre for the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit under the Department of Food today.