

JU syndicate bans siege as teachers' protests on

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THE Jahangirnagar University syndicate has decided not to allow the vice-chancellor's residence and office to be besieged and announced a month-long summer vacation from May 5.

The decision came at an emergency meeting held Friday afternoon at the VC's residence that has been under siege for the second straight day by a group of agitating teachers.

The teachers laid siege to the VC's residence and the university administrative building in protest at the

detention of two colleagues and demanding that the VC Professor Sharif Enamul Kabir step down.

After the syndicate meeting, registrar Abu Bakar Siddiqui informed journalists that the syndicate decided to close the university for a month from May 5 for summer vacation ending on Jun 5.

The syndicate also formed a three-member committee, headed by the university treasurer Professor Nasiruddin, to investigate the allegation of assault of botany department chairman Professor Mohammad

Ali Akand, a teacher loyal to VC.

The other members are Professor Sheikh Manjurul Haque of geography and environment department and Professor Shahabuddin of law and justice department.

Convener of the agitating teachers' platform Shikkhak Shamaj Professor Nasim Akhter Hossain said they would announce next course of programme at 2:00pm today after learning about the syndicate decision officially.

When asked about what will happen if the VC's residence and offices are be
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 sieged, syndicate member Professor Bakhtiyar Rana said no such decision was made at the meeting.

Members entered the VC's residence through the back entrance for the syndicate meeting.

Earlier at around 11:00am on Friday, the teachers supporting the VC took position at the back entrance as a counterweight to the agitating teachers besieging the main entrance to the house since early hours of Thursday.

Tension ran high on the campus as teachers faced off against each other and over 300 police were deployed to avoid any untoward in-

cident. A large number of police also took position between the confronting groups.

The VC called the emergency meeting a day after cancelling a senate meeting against the backdrop that both the university administrative building and VC's residence have been under siege since Thursday.

The agitating teachers gathered at the main entrance to the VC's residence in the early hours of Thursday after police detained two of their colleagues from their university residences in connection with a case filed by a teacher allegedly in the VC's favour.

At 11:30pm, a Bangladesh

Chhatra League faction, known to be 'pro-VC Chhatra League,' led by Sheikh Shariful Islam, Ashrafuzzaman Liton, Mehedi Hasan Samrat and Saiful Islam Shakil vandalised the 'VC rejection stage' erected in front of the administrative building.

They also set some banners and festoons ablaze.

'Police officers have been put on alert to foil any kind of situation that may lead to an unstable situation,' said Dhaka district additional police superintendent Sheikh Rafiqul Islam.

Academic activities at the university came to a near halt after the BCL activists killed English department student Zubair Ahmed, who

was a former BCL activist, on January 9 this year.

Zubair was killed at a time when the VC was already facing widespread criticism from the university teachers and students alike for appointing teachers compromising the rules.

Both students and teachers launched separate movement against the VC demanding punishment to the Zubair killers and cancellation of the appointments.

The VC expelled 13 students for having connection with the Zubair murder but did not take any initiative regarding the appointments, prompting 'Shikkhak Samaj' to continue with their movement.