

Teachers call off protests, students continue

Hasina assures teachers of resolving JU crisis

Our Correspondent Savar

JAHANGIRNAGAR University teachers and students pushing for the vice-chancellor's removal for a few months became divided as the teachers rallying under the banner of Shikkhak Samaj called off their strike on Thursday on the prime minister's assurance of a resolu-

tion of the crisis.

The prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, assured the teachers of resolving the ongoing crisis in consultation with the president, Zillur Rahman, who is chancellor of the university.

But students on demonstrations announced that they would continue with their protests until the vice-

chancellor was removed from the position.

Shikkhak Samaj was demanding the resignation of the vice-chancellor for his alleged corruption, recruitment of teachers on political grounds and patronisation of Chhatra League activists. The demonstration intensified after the murder of

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Zubair Ahmed, an English department student, on January 9:

'Keep faith in me. I will not disappoint you.' Shikkhak Samaj convener Nasim Akhter Hossain quoted the prime minister as saying after an hour's meeting with Hasina at Prime Minister's Office.

A 12-member delegation, led by Nasim, met Hasina in an attempt at breaking the impasse in the university over the movement for removal of Shariff Enamul Kabir as vice chancellor.

In the evening, another delegation of JU teachers, led by the vice-chancellor, also met Hasina at Ganabhaban.

The prime minister has asked the vice-chancellor to resolve the crisis with-

out any delay and restore a congenial atmosphere to the campus,' Hasina's press secretary Abul Kalam Azad told New Age.

Nasim told the reporters that the prime minister had called them to discuss the latest campus situation in view of the ongoing movement.

Hasina told the teachers that she would talk with the chancellor to resolve the crisis, delegation member ATM Atikur Rahman told New Age.

The teachers sought the prime minister's intervention when the situation became critical after some students had gone on a fast-unto-death since Tuesday demanding removal of the vice-chancellor and protesting at assault on cultural ac-

tivists by Chhatra League.

'We welcome the prime minister's assurance. But we will continue with our hunger strike as long the vice-chancellor does not step down,' said Shakila Sarmin, general secretary of Jahangirnagar Shangkritik Jote, a platform of the students on demonstrations.

Russell Rana, Zubair Hossain, Sadia Zafrin and Atia Ferdousi Chaiti under the banner of Sangskritik Jote went on the fast-unto-death but two of them fell sick on Wednesday. Another student, Maynul Haque Tarif, joined in on Thursday.

Soma Momtaz, a teacher of drama and dramatics, and Shamima Sultana, a teacher of Bangla, on behalf of Shikkhak Samaj joined the students on the second day

of their protests.

The teachers loyal to the vice-chancellor, meanwhile, formed a human chain on the campus at noon in protest at the demonstrations against the vice-chancellor. They brought out a procession on the campus.

A number of academicians, rights activists and cultural and media personalities also expressed their solidarity with the students and teachers on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

On Thursday morning, columnist Sayed Abul Maksud, Dhaka University's journalism teacher Robayet Ferdus and former Bangladesh Chhatra Union president Sharifuzzaman Sharif expressed their solidarity with the demonstrating teachers and students.