

BUET STALEMATE

Students want minister to keep promises first

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BUET students rallying for the removal of the university vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor on Friday said that they would get back to classrooms once the education minister removed the pro-vice-chancellor and withdrew the cases filed against students and teachers and reshuffled the ad-

ministration as he promised at meetings with them.

Students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology at a press conference in front of the academic council building in the afternoon also said that they were firm on their demand for the removal of the vice-chancellor SM Nazrul Islam.

'We are ready to get back to classrooms only after the

education minister does all he earlier said he would do,' said Sudipto Saha, a mechanical engineering student, at the press conference.

BUET teachers, students and employees have taken to the streets since April 7, to push for their demand for the removal of the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor, Habibur Rahman, for

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their alleged irregularities.

'We have a specific demand for the removal of the BUET vice-chancellor as we believe it is not possible to bring back BUET glory keeping him in the position as academic activities in BUET are not secure under his incumbency,' Sudipto added.

'We are waiting for the education minister's steps to end the ongoing stalemate in BUET,' he said.

The minister held two meetings with students and teachers on September 5 and September 3 on ways to end the stalemate.

At both the meetings, Nahid assured students and teachers that the pro-vice-chancellor, Habibur Rahman, would be removed, the cases filed against BUET teachers and students would be withdrawn and the university administration would be reshuffled as required beginning with the halls to resolve the crisis.

Nahid said that the steps would be taken after some discussions on the issue

of the removal of the vice-chancellor.

Nahid also assured the students that no action in any form would be taken against the students who were rallying for the removal of the two top university officials.

The minister gave the assurance after the students had demanded security as they were feeling insecure with Nazrul Islam in office as he might initiate academic and disciplinary action against students rallying against him.

After the meeting with Nahid, BUET teachers at a press conference said that they had decided to return to classrooms at the minister's assurance for taking steps to meet the demands of the students and teachers.

The BUET Teachers' Association general secretary, Ashraful Islam, told New Age that they were ready to return to classrooms. 'We have not set aside our demand for the vice-chancellor's removal. We have decided to return to classrooms at the assurance of

the minister.'

'We are waiting for the government to take effective steps to remove the pro-vice-chancellor and to withdraw the cases,' he added.

The BUET crisis has lingered as the government decided to remove the pro-vice-chancellor, keeping the vice-chancellor in office, but students took a rigid stance about the removal of both the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor.

The government, however, is yet to remove the pro-vice-chancellor.

Both the education minister and the secretary told New Age that the process for the removal of Habibur Rahman had begun but it would need some time.

The minister said that the government had already started honouring the commitments it made at the meeting with teachers on September 3 to resolve the crisis.

Initiatives for the withdrawal of two cases filed against teachers and students began.

Academic activities in

the university were yet to resume after August 25 when the university reopened after 44 days of closure in the face of teachers' movement.

The crisis in the university began on April 7 when the teachers' association began a movement, including abstention from work and sit-ins, and levelled 16 allegations against the two top university officials. Students and other university officials joined them in mid-July.

The protesters began rallying on July 11 for the removal of the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor after the authorities on the night of July 10 closed the university.

The same day all the five deans and the 17 department heads and directors of three institutes under the university resigned as the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor refused to quit.

The teachers rallied against the administration between April 8 and May 5, demanding removal of the two top officials.