

BUET protests on

Resignation deadline extended

Mohiuddin Alamgir and
Sardar Mahabbat Ali

BUET students on Sunday continued holding protests, giving the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor a fresh deadline of 11:00am today to resign.

Activists of the disbanded university unit of the Chhatra League, the ruling Awami League-backed student organisation, meanwhile on the day, faced off the students, who were rallying for the removal of the two top officials of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, and snatched away the PA system the students were using. The PA system was, however, returned after a while.

Later, a large contingent of riot police marched into the BUET campus and drove the agitating students off the administrative building, the office of the vice-chancellor, where several hundred students were holding a sit-in late at night.

The vice-chancellor was, however, not present at the office at night.



Bangladesh Chhatra League activists on Sunday attack a room at the BUET where general students gathered to continue their protest programme demanding removal of the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor of the university. — Sanaul Haque

Around 300 students regrouped themselves within half an hour and began their sit-in at the academic coun-

cil building adjacent to the administrative building at about midnight.

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As the riot police cordoned off the students, they shouted slogans in protest against the presence of the police on the campus.

The deputy commissioner of Ramna zone of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Syed Nurul Islam, who led the riot police, told the students that they came to the campus as a case was filed with the Shahbagh police station.

In the case, it was mentioned that the office of the vice-chancellor was ransacked and important documents were damaged earlier on the day.

He also told the students that the High Court had also ordered a ban on any kind of demonstrations on the campus.

But, the students said the ban was not on the students' demonstration.

A tense situation was prevailing on the campus till filing of the report at 12:30am on Monday as the police contingent was deployed at different points on the campus.

The students on Saturday gave the vice-chancellor, SM Nazrul Islam, and the pro-vice-chancellor, Habibur Rahman, till 10:00am on Sunday to resign. As the two officials did not resign by the deadline, the students extended the deadline till 11:00am today.

Earlier on the day, the students, carrying banners reading 'Save BUET,' burnt Nazrul and Habibur in effigy and staged a sit-in in and

outside the office of the vice-chancellor.

The students said that if the two top officials did not resign by the Monday deadline, they would not leave the vice-chancellor's office and wage a tougher movement to push for their removal.

'We will not leave the office until the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor resign their positions,' mechanical engineering student Faisal Hossain said about 5:00pm on Sunday.

Around noon, more than 50 teachers went to the vice-chancellors' office on the first floor of the registrar's building to meet Nazrul Islam but he was not in his office.

Chhatra League activists, meanwhile, walked down in procession the areas the general students had gathered and shouted slogans in favour of the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor.

The Chhatra League activists, led by the disbanded unit's general secretary Tanmoy Biswas, about 1:30pm snatched away the PA system of the students and asked them not to hold protests on the campus.

The activists went to the administrative building where general students were holding protests and tried to enter the first floor that houses the office of the vice-chancellor.

The Chhatra League activists said that they had information that the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor were confined to

their offices and the activists were there to rescue them.

Tanmoy alleged that Islami Chhatra Shibir people were rallying against the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor.

The students stopped the activists when they tried to enter the first floor of the building, leading to a tussle between the groups that created some tension. The police showed the Chhatra League activists out.

About 40 minutes before the incident, some 50 Chhatra League activists, wearing white T-shirts inscribing the text reading 'Honourable teachers, keep classes out of movement' brought out a procession demanding an early resumption of classes and the holding of examinations.

Before Nazrul and Habibur had been burnt in effigy, the students held a human chain in front of the civil engineering building where many teachers, in black T-shirts inscribed with text reading 'Save BUET. Remove VC and Pro-VC' joined the protests.

The students on Friday decided to return to the classrooms only after the crisis was resolved with the removal of the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor for their involvement in irregularities.

A large number of teachers also attended the protests, saying that they would stand by the students so that they are not attacked by any quarters.

The BUET Teachers' As-

sociation general secretary, Ashraful Islam, told New Age that the teachers were attending the protests individually and not under the banner of the organisation. There is a High Court injunction against the teachers' movement.

The vice-chancellor told New Age in the afternoon that he was aware that students and teachers had gathered in his office. 'I will take care of the matter,' he said.

'I had a discussion with teachers yesterday [Saturday] and I told them that I would take the next step after holding a talk with the minister concerned,' he added.

No classes and academic activities have been held in the university for nine consecutive days as the teachers abstained from taking classes without any formal announcement after the reopening of the institution.

The vice-chancellor on July 10 closed the university for 44 days from July 11, triggering protests by teachers for the removal of Nazrul and Habibur. Students and employees later joined in.

The High Court on July 31 ordered an injunction against demonstrations of teachers on the campus and since then the teachers, however, have not announced any fresh programmes.

The university authorities issued a notice to all deans, department heads, teachers and officials concerned asking them to resume classes and to immediately begin the admission process.