

BUET pro-VC removed

Students wait for teachers' call to return to classrooms

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THE government on Sunday removed the pro-vice-chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, in the face of protests the teachers and students have held since April with breaks.

The education minister in a circular said that Habibur Rahman had been removed as pro-vice-chancellor in keeping with what the education minister told the students at meetings earlier to resolve the crisis in the university.

The teachers and students have since April rallied for the removal of the

vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor on grounds of their being involved in irregularities in the university administration.

The circular also said that Habibur would return to his previous position of teaching in the civil engineering department in the university. The circular, however, did not give any reasons for his removal.

Habibur told New Age that he was yet to receive the circular. 'I will get the copy tomorrow [Monday] and then think of it.'

The education minister, Nurul Islam Nahid, at a meeting with an 11-member delegation of the teachers on

September 3 assured them of removing the pro-vice-chancellor and withdrawal of the cases filed against BUET teachers and students on charge of entering the vice-chancellor's office and vandalism there.

Nahid had said that the steps would be taken after some discussions on the issue of the removal of the vice-chancellor.

SM Lutful Kabir, a teacher of the Institute of Information and Communications Technology under the university, who resigned as the university registrar on Saturday night took back his resignation letter on Sunday evening.

Demanding the removal of the vice-chancellor, SM Nazrul Islam, he said, 'I tendered my resignation feeling sorry to work under the incumbent vice-chancellor for the apparent involvement of him and his deputy in irregularities and corruption.'

'But state minister for science and technology Yeafesh Osman and the students have requested me not to leave BUET,' the teacher said.

'I will go on leave for three months. If the vice-chancellor is not removed by this time, I will be forced to reconsider my decision,' he added.

The students were,

meanwhile, waiting for the instruction from their teachers whether they would get back to classrooms.

'We are ready to return to classrooms as soon as our teachers will ask us to do so,' said Suddipta Saha, one of the organisers of the student movement, on Sunday.

Reposing faith in the minister's words, he said, 'Everything now depends on the teachers whether they would resume academic activities soon.'

During another meeting with the students on September 5, the minister gave an assurance that no action in any form would be taken.

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against the students who had rallied for the removal of the two top university administrative 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.

BUET teachers said that

they would get back to classrooms after the proposals the minister made at the September 3 meeting were effected.

The BUET Teachers' Association general secretary, Ashraful Islam, told New Age that they would return to classrooms after the proposals were implemented.

Asked about resuming academic activities, Ashraful said that it might take two to three days to complete the process. He hoped that the

two cases filed against teachers and students would be withdrawn by this time.

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 re-

moval 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.