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25 BUET teachers resign

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university handed in their resignation letters to the registrar Abu Siddique about 6:30pm.

The university syndicate at an emergency meeting at night called for a judicial investigation of the allegations levelled by the teachers' association, the vice-chancellor Nazrul Islam told reporters after the meeting. The vice-chancellor said that he should not resign 'under duress.'

The teachers were, however, not happy about the proposal and stood their ground of continuing their movement till their demands were met. 'We will continue with our movement,' said the association's treasurer Aatur Rahman.

The syndicate meeting was supposed to begin at 6:30pm and it was delayed by three hours for a quorum crisis. Seven of the 11-member body finally turned up about 9:30pm.

The deans who resigned their positions are engineering dean Md Monimul Haque, civil engineering dean Muhammad Zakaria, mechanical engineering dean Md Refayet Ullah, electrical and electronic engineering dean Satya Prasad Majumder, and architecture and planning dean Khaleda Rashid.

The heads of departments who submitted their resignation are Izaq Hossain of chemical engineering and Mohar Ali of materials and metallurgical engineering.

Shakila Rahman of chemistry, Md Elias of mathematics, Md Mostak Hossain of physics, Mohammad Tamim of petroleum and mineral resources engineering, Mujibur Rahman of civil engineering, Umme Kulsum Navera of water resources engineering, Md Ehsan of mechanical engineering, Mohammad Rafiqul Islam of naval architecture and marine engineering, Abdul-lahil Azeem of industrial

and production engineering, Pran Kanai Saha of electrical and electronic engineering, Abu Syed Md Latiful Hoque of computer science and engineering, Zebun Nasreen Ahmed of architecture, Md Murshikul Alam of humanities, Shakil Akhtar of urban and regional planning and Fakhru'l Islam of glass and ceramics engineering resigned as heads of department.

The Institute of Water and Flood Management director Md Munsur Rahman, the Institute of Appropriate Technology director Md Kamal Uddin and Institute of Information and Communication Technology director SM Lutful Kabir also submitted their resignation.

The authorities earlier on Tuesday announced that the university would remain closed for 44 days on the occasion of summer vacation, Shab-e-Qadr, Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja earlier than the schedule with most of the teachers now continuing with a movement seeking the removal of the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor.

On Tuesday, the teachers gave the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor till July 14 to resign their positions. They said that they would go on strike for an indefinite period otherwise.

The teachers levelled more than a dozen allegations against the university administration, including nepotism, autocratic rule and irregularities in the administration by the vice-chancellor and pro-vice-chancellor.

The teachers abstained from work between April 7 and May 5 to push for their demands but suspended their strike on the assurance of the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, on May 5.

Teachers, students and officials of the university earlier in the day began a sit-in for an indefinite pe-

riod in front of the academic council building demanding withdrawal of the closure of the university and the resignation of the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor Md Habibur Rahman.

Condemning the vice-chancellor for his unilaterally closing the university on Tuesday night, they termed the decision 'illogical' and said that it was meant to foil their movement.

The vice-chancellor made the decision on closing the university till August 24 without consulting anybody and it once again proves his autocratic attitude,' said the BUET Teachers' Association president, Md Mujibur Rahman.

He said that they would continue to sit in in protest until the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor left their office.

The teachers' association also sought an immediate intervention of the president, Zillur Rahman, who is also chancellor of the university, and the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, in the resolution of the crisis.

The association's president said that the vice-chancellor was trying to convince people high up in the government by providing false information.

The association's general secretary Md Ashrafur Islam said that the university authorities were trying to intimidate students in various ways to foil the movement but the students joined the movement spontaneously.

Several hundred teachers of all the faculties attended the sit-in.

Before the sit-in, several thousand students and members on the staff walked in a silent procession about 11:50am expressing their support for the demand of teachers who had at a general meeting earlier in the morning planned to go on strike between 9:00am and 5:00pm.

But they held a sit-in after

the students had started rallying because of the closure of the university for 44 days.

They said that the university authorities were disrupting normal life of students by closing dining rooms in halls and halting transports for students.

Civil engineering student Mehrab Akhter alleged, 'The authorities also are trying to keep the students outside the movement in various means even by snapping internet connections in halls.'

The vice-chancellor, meanwhile, explained his closing the university earlier than the schedule. He told reporters, 'I announced an early vacation as there were possibilities of clashes between the students.'

'There were no classes because of the teachers' strike. The teachers are also trying to drag students into protests. So, we have made the decision on the closure after discussing the matter with syndicate members over telephone,' he added.

He also said, 'I have no problem in resigning my position but I will not do it bowing down to any false claim.'

Administration officials said that the vice-chancellor had sent a letter to the chancellor, Zillur Rahman, expressing his willingness to resign his position.

Ruling Awami League-backed Chhatra League activists, meanwhile, said that the teachers' protests were backed by Jamaat-e-Islami.

The activists distributed a leaflet in the organisation's name, threatening students with stern action if they would join the movement under the leadership of teachers loyal to the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

The BUET unit of the Chhatra League was disbanded on June 8 after a clash between two factions.

When the attention of the vice-chancellor was called to the matter, he condemned the incident.