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BUET protests continue

University to hire teachers if needed: VC

Staff Correspondent

THE BUET vice-chancellor, SM Nazrul Islam, on Tuesday said that he would hire teachers to take classes and conduct exams in reaction to the teachers' threat of Monday that they would resign en masse unless their demands were met by Saturday.

The teachers, who have for a week been rallying on the campus for the removal of the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor, Habibur Rahman, on Monday gave the two top officials till Saturday to resign and threatened en masse resignation, otherwise.

'Are not private universities run by hired teachers?' Nazrul Islam said as he talked with New Age.

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BUET protests continue

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'Private universities do not have teachers of their own. If necessary, teachers will be hired. There must be some alternatives,' he said when he was asked about the teachers' threat of en masse resignation.

The teachers, who have been joined in students and employees, gave the two top officials till July 21 to meet their demand. They threatened en masse resignation on July 22, otherwise.

The teachers, on Monday, made the decision hours after the education minister, Nurul Islam Nahid, held a meeting with the institution's alumni and the five deans, heads of the 17 departments and directors of three institutes under BUET who resigned their positions on July 11, a day after the vice-chancellor had closed the university for 44 days. The meeting ended inconclusively.

The vice-chancellor said he would recruit teachers in 15 days. 'We will give

advertisements and recruit new teachers in 15 days,' he said. 'Is there dearth of people in the country?'

He, however, said, 'The university rule does not allow such en masse resignation. It is a deception.'

The vice-chancellor said that he had been afraid if about 150 teachers would 'sign the resignation papers.'

He termed the teachers' movement 'illogical' and said he would not resign under duress.

The BUET Teachers' Association general secretary, Ashraful Islam, told New Age that he expected that 99 per cent of the 430 teachers would resign en masse on Sunday if their demands were not met.

He said about 270 teachers had attended the association's general meeting on Monday night.

Ashraful, however, declined to say how many teachers had so far signed the resignation letter but saying that a significant number of teachers had already signed their resignation

letters.

A top leader of the teachers' association said that they were contacting with other teachers who did not attend the general meeting for various reasons. Till Tuesday afternoon, about 150 teachers signed their resignation letters.

Protesters in BUET observed a token sit-in for two hours from 11:00am in front of the council building where they have been agitating for the seventh straight day on Tuesday.

Teachers' association leaders Ashraful Islam and Ataur Rahman and mechanical final-year student Sudipta Saha addressed the gathering.

Sudipta led a vow on behalf of the students saying that if the teachers resigned and if they were not reinstated, the students would not join classes.

Several hundred teachers, students and employees joined the token hunger strike on the day.

On the other hand, campaigners against the teach-

ers' movement, teamed up as BUET Shikkhak, Chhatra, Karmakarta and Karmachari Oikya Forum, allegedly backed by the Chhatra League, the ruling Awami League's student wing, who were rallying in support of the administration, called off their programme for an indefinite period.

BUET's civil engineering teacher Munaz Ahmed Noor, a leader of Oikya Forum, told New Age that they had called off their programme on Tuesday evening leaving the matter with the government to deal with. He hoped that the crisis would soon be resolved through discussions.

The teachers, who also in April 8-May 5 rallied against the administration, pushing for the removal of the two top officials, earlier levelled 16 allegations against the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor including 'illegal appointment of the pro-vice-chancellor and a deputy registrar on political grounds and, corruption and irregularities.'