

## Stalemate continues at BUET

Teachers won't talk with VC, pro-VC

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STALEMATE in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology over the resignation of the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor dragged on as teachers, students and employees rallied for the third consecutive day on Friday. While the vice-chancellor, SM Nazrul Islam, stood his ground, teachers refused to budge on their demand for the removal of the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor, M Habibur Rahman.

The BUET Teachers' Association at a meeting in the evening decided to continue with the movement and condemned the propaganda that certain quarters were carrying out to brand them as loyal to Jamaat and Hizb ut-Tahrir. They also decided to bring out a silent procession on the campus about 11:00am today, the teachers said. The students decided to begin a mass signature campaign today in support of the demand, the teachers' association treasurer, Ataur Rahman, told New Age.

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There had, however, been efforts on Friday to resolve the crisis through negotiations that the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, advised the vice-chancellor to do when he met her on Thursday.

The BUET administration has not yet taken any initiative to sit with the teachers till Friday evening. The striking teachers, on the other hand, did not want to sit with the vice-chancellor. They rather wanted to sit with the president and the prime minister to resolve the crisis.

'I have not yet formally asked them for talks but have plans to do so soon,' the vice-chancellor told New Age in the afternoon, rejecting the teachers' demand for his resignation.

The teachers said they would not sit with the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor.

'Negotiations are impossible with the incumbent vice-chancellor and the pro-

vice-chancellor as earlier attempts at holding discussions have yielded any results,' the BUET Teachers' Association treasurer, Ataur Rahman, said.

He, however, said they preferred to talk with the president, Zillur Rahman, also chancellor of the university and the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina.

The students expressing their solidarity with their teachers continued to sit in front of the administrative building. They also put up black banners demanding the resignation of the two top university officials.

The banners read: 'We want corruption-free BUET; We want corrupt VC and pro-VC removed.' 'Take our classes, please.' 'We've not take admission to BUET to face such a situation' and 'Sparkle in our sleepless eyes, confidence in our soul! We are BUETIANS! We bet we'll reach our goal.'

The agitating students sang choruses, played and

shouted slogans against the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor.

A number of BUET alumni, including the Bangladesh Paribesh Bachao Andolon joint secretary, Iqbal Habib, former REHAB president Tanvir Probal and the first vice-president of BUET's hall for female students Sayida Sultana visited the campus on Friday and expressed their solidarity with the demand of the teachers.

On Thursday midnight, a group of ruling Awami League-backed Chhatra League leaders and activists tried to enter the campus but failed as all gates were locked, witnesses said.

The incident somewhat panicked general students who were sitting in there for an indefinite period.

Mishu Biswas and Tanmoy, president and general secretary of the disbanded BUET unit Chhatra League are learnt to have led the attack. The unit was disbanded on June 8 after a clash

between two factions. When contacted, Tanmoy said, 'They [agitating students] did not allow one of our brothers to get into the campus. So we went there to get to know the reason.'

The teachers, students and officials began a sit-in on July 11 for an indefinite period to push for their demand as the vice-chancellor closed BUET for 44 days on July 10 to that the movement died down.

They earlier levelled 16 allegations against the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor. An internal investigation committee found irregularities in the administration. Another committee, set up by the syndicate later, did not corroborate the findings of the previous committee.

Rejecting the latest committee set up on May 3, the teachers resumed the strike and had rallied for 28 days. The strike was called off on May 5 on an assurance of the prime minister.