

## BUET teachers threaten to resign en masse

Ask VC, pro-VC to quit by Saturday . . .

Mohiuddin Alamgir

THE agitating teachers of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology on Monday warned that they would resign en masse on July 22 if the vice-chancellor, SM Nazrul Islam, and pro-vice-chancellor Habibur Rahman did not resign by July 21.

The BUET Teachers' Association general secretary, Ashraful Islam gave the ultimatum after an emergency general meeting of the association on Monday evening.

He said BUET teachers, students and employees would continue their move-

ment for removal of the VC and pro-VC.

'We will stage sit-in from 11:00am to 1:00pm every day from Tuesday until our demand is met' Ashraful told New Age.

The BUET vice-chancellor, SM Nazrul Islam told New Age at about 8:00pm that he was not aware of any ultimatum. 'In any such situation, I will take a decision after consulting with the authorities who appointed me as the vice-chancellor,' he said.

Education minister Nurul Islam Nahid said further steps would be taken to end the BUET stalemate after consulting with president

Zillur Rahman and prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

After a meeting on the BUET situation at the ministry, Nahid said he would convey the points of the discussions to the president and prime minister for their directives on the issue.

The education minister held the meeting with several former vice-chancellors, and deans and departmental heads of the university to find a way out of the crisis in BUET.

Nahid also urged the BUET protesters to call off their movement and go back to the classroom.

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'We will consider their opinions with due importance. We will try to find a peaceful and fair solution to the crisis. Our aim is to resume normal activities at BUET,' Nahid said.

Science and technology state minister Yeafesh Osman, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on education ministry Rashed Khan Menon, University Grants Commission chairman AK Azad Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of Asia Pacific University and former BUET teacher Zamirur Reza Chowdhury, former BUET vice-chancellors Abdul Matin Patwary and MH Khan, lawmaker Mustafa Jalal Mohiuddin, President of Bangladesh Institute of Engineers and RAJUK chairman Nurul Huda, architects Mobasshar Hossain and Robiul Islam, engineers Mohammad Ali and Abdus

Sabur attended meeting.

Deans and department chairs, institute directors who resigned earlier in support of the ongoing movement after the vice-chancellor had closed the university for 14 days, also attended the meeting.

The BUET protesters observed a token hunger strike for two hours from 11:00am in front of the academic council building where they continued the sit-in for the sixth straight day on Monday.

Along with others, BUET teachers' association leaders Helali Nesar, Sarwar Jahan, Alaur Rahman, ABM Badruzzaman, Delwar Hossain, AKM Masud, BUET technical employees' association leader SM Shaheen addressed the protesters.

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

Anti-movement campaign-

ers, who teamed up as BUET Shikkhak, Chhatra, Karmakarta and Karmachari Oikya Forum, allegedly backed by the Chhatra League, held a rally in support of the administration.

They demanded a judicial inquiry of the BUET crisis.

The protesters and anti-movement campaigners blamed each other for the stalemate in BUET, which has about 10,000 students.

Both the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor termed the movement 'illogical' and said they would not resign under duress.

Nazrul Islam said, 'A vice-chancellor cannot resign without a reason'.

He termed 'positive' the education ministry's move to end the stalemate and urged both the groups to call off their movement.

On Sunday, the protesters in a memorandum urged pres-

ident Zillur Rahman, also the chancellor of the university, to remove SM Nazrul Islam and Habibur Rahman. Their delegation submitted the memorandum to the president.

The teachers, students and employees began the sit-in on July 11 pushing for the removal of the vice-chancellor and the pro-vice-chancellor after the authorities on July 10 closed the university for 44 days.

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.

They 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.'