

Prof Anwar leaves JU with police escort

Agitating teachers see it as part of govt's initiative to remove him as VC

JU CORRESPONDENT

In the face of relentless protests by teachers, the embattled vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, Prof Anwar Hossain, left the campus yesterday upon directives from the government high-ups, an initiative seen as a prelude to his removal.

A team of police escorted Prof Anwar out of the campus around 2:30pm in his official vehicle. His wife Ayesha Akter and Assistant Proctor Kazi Saiful Islam accompanied him. The couple took some baggage with them.

Registrar Abu Bakar Siddique, however, said the VC had gone on a "five-day sick leave", and Pro-VC (admin) Prof Afsar Ahmed would be acting VC in his absence.

"A process of resolving the deadlock at the university started with the VC's departure and the way he left the campus means to us an initiative for his removal," said JU Teachers Association (Juta) President

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Prof Ajit Kumar Majumder.

One of the protest leaders, Prof Kamrul Ahsan, said law enforcers told them that the government high-ups had taken an initiative to remove Prof Anwar, and his departure was part of that initiative.

The agitating teachers started a sit-in near the VC's residence on Monday night shortly after he returned from 12 days of sick leave. During this period, the teachers confined two pro-VCs, pressing for an immediate VC panel election to replace Prof Anwar.

Their protests intensified when bombs were exploded near the Juta president's house Wednesday night. Around 9:30pm that night, some 200 teachers and students gathered near the VC's house and asked him to quit in 30 minutes or get "driven out of the campus".

Shortly afterwards, Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka district Sheikh Yousuf Harun, Savar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Kamrul

Ahsan Mollah, and Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) of Savar Sheikh Russel arrived at the VC's residence with police reinforcement.

"We are here on the instructions of the PMO and education ministry to take Prof Anwar Hossain to Dhaka, and it doesn't mean that the high-ups are satisfied with him," the DC told the agitators on Wednesday night. "Our arrival is part of a government initiative to resolve the ongoing stalemate on the campus."

As the VC refused to leave that night, the officials left early yesterday before the UNO and the ASP arrived around 12:00pm again and took him out of the campus.

Majority of JU teachers have been demanding Prof Anwar's resignation since February, accusing him of committing irregularities in teachers' recruitment, spoiling teacher-student relations, and misusing university funds. The biochemistry professor of Dhaka University took charge as JU VC on May 20, 2012.