

Attempted rape on JU campus sparks protest, calls for proctor's resignation

Students stage overnight sit-in, lock proctor's office after 48-hour arrest deadline expires

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JU Correspondent



Female students stage overnight protest in front of the vice-chancellor's residence. Photo: Sakib Ahmed

Female students at Jahangirnagar University staged an overnight sit-in in front of the vice-chancellor's residence, demanding the resignation of Proctor Prof AKM Rashidul Alam after the suspect in an attempted rape and murder of a female student was not arrested within the 48-hour deadline set by protesters.

Around 1:30am today, the students brought out a protest procession from Tarzan Chattar, marching through the university's female residential halls before gathering in front of the VC's residence. They later moved and locked the proctor's office around 10:30am.



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During the demonstration, they declared the proctor 'persona non grata' on campus



Deputy Registrar of the university's Security division, Gafrul Hasan Chowdhury Sajal, confirmed The Daily Star that the proctor's office has been locked.

There, they accused the university administration of failing to ensure campus safety and renewed their demand for the resignation of the proctor and the entire proctorial body.



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Rape Attempt: Protests resume at JU

The protest follows an attempted rape and murder of a female student on Tuesday night, when she was allegedly dragged from a road near the old Fazilatunnesa Hall into a nearby wooded area.

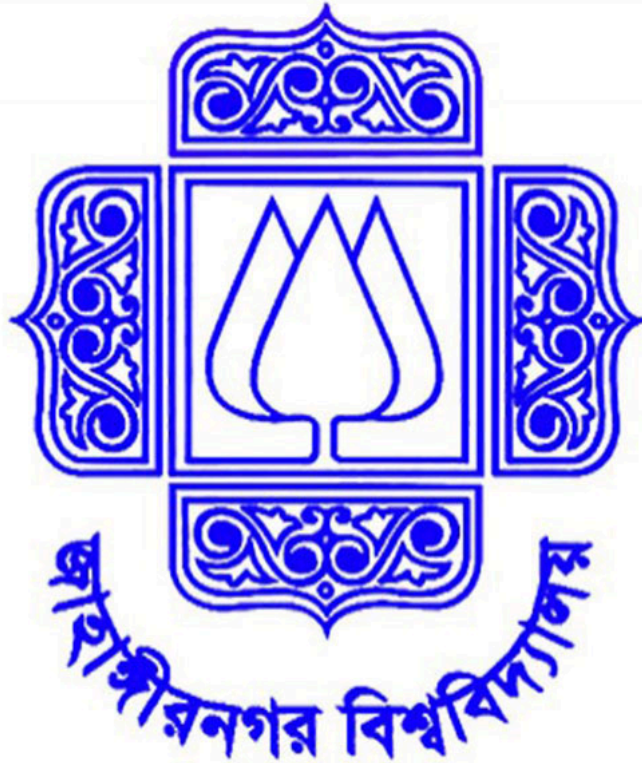
The university authorities filed an attempted rape and murder case with Ashulia Police Station on Wednesday against an unidentified individual.

Following a massive protest on Wednesday night, students and the university administration held a meeting where the students gave the authorities a 48-hour ultimatum to arrest the suspect, warning that failure to do so would lead to demands for the proctor's resignation.

Their demands include the immediate arrest of the accused and swift legal action, resignation of the proctorial body if the administration fails to meet the deadline, stronger anti-harassment measures, enhanced campus security, the recruitment of female security personnel for the quick response team, and the formulation and implementation of cyber safety protections for students.

As the 48-hour ultimatum expired, students said the proctor had lost the moral authority to remain in office due to repeated failures to ensure campus security and effectively address previous incidents.

“Students from different halls and departments gathered at the guest room of Taramon Bibi Hall around 10:00pm. Women from different academic levels took part in the discussion, which lasted nearly two hours,” said Lamisha Zaman, a student of the history department.



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“Questions have emerged over the role of the proctorial body in light of several incidents over the past two years. That is why we have unanimously demanded their resignation,” she added.

“We gave this proctorial body two and a half years. During this time, female students have faced repeated harassment on campus,” said Sohagi Samia, a student of the drama and dramatics department.

“They have failed to resolve these incidents or show any visible initiative. We are deeply disappointed. There is no room to give them any more time. The proctor must resign immediately,” she added.

Around 2:30am, JU Vice-Chancellor Prof Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan met the protesters in front of his residence, leading to a heated exchange over their demand for the proctor’s resignation.

“If any student, teacher, or staff member commits an offence inside the university, the proctorial body handles it. But when an outsider commits a crime, it becomes a criminal matter that falls primarily under police jurisdiction,” the VC said.

As his remarks triggered immediate reactions from the protesters, he later said, “There are established procedures. A proctor cannot resign simply because students are standing in front of the residence demanding it. A committee will investigate whether there was any negligence on the part of the proctorial body.”



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The students, however, rejected the VC's statement and continued their sit-in.

After 5:00am, Proctor Prof Rashidul Alam reached the spot and addressed the protesters.

“For the past 18 months, I have worked for the welfare of the university and its students. We have brought the entire campus under CCTV surveillance, controlled drug-related activities, and completed the much-awaited Jucusu election,” he said.

“Following the recent incident, we have filed a case and taken all necessary steps. We hope law enforcement agencies will quickly identify and arrest the accused. If anyone has been hurt during my tenure, I express my regret,” he added.

As students again called for his resignation, the proctor said, “The honourable vice-chancellor appointed me. If he asks me to resign, I will do so immediately. But the university has an institutional structure, and such matters should be resolved institutionally.”

When the protesters urged VC Kamrul Ahsan to allow the proctor's resignation, he said, “Teachers have made me vice-chancellor, not to take decisions while standing on the street. We must follow the university's rules and regulations. Action will be taken through an investigation.”

The proctor must be given an opportunity to defend himself, he said, adding, “If we find negligence or failure on the part of the proctor, we will take action. The outcome of the investigation will be informed to you within seven days.”

The students rejected the assurance and continued chanting slogans demanding the proctor step down.

The protesters said they plan to lock the registrar building tomorrow, vowing to continue their movement until the suspect is arrested and the proctor resigns in line with their demands.

Earlier yesterday, JU authorities announced a 14-point set of measures aimed at strengthening campus security following the incident.