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BUET students, VC vow to thwart violence

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Students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology on Wednesday take oath to resist violence and sectarianism on its campus wrapping up their demonstrations that began on October 7 after the murder of Abrar Fahad. — Ali Hossain Mintu

The students, the vice-chancellor, deans and the hall provosts of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology on Wednesday took oath to 'thwart all criminal activities and sectarian evil forces' from the campus.

The oath-taking, which was conducted at the BUET auditorium, capped the 11-day long agitation of the students in protest against the murder of their fellow student Abrar Fahad.

Other BUET teachers, who were also present in the auditorium, however, did not participate in the oath-taking programme.

The students said they were withdrawing their street protests but they would continue boycotting academic activities including classes and exams until their demand of rustivating the accused students of the murder is not met.

'I swear that I will be active against all injustices and discriminations on the campus...I will thwart unitedly all the criminal activities and sectarian evil forces,' said the agitating students, vice-chancellor Saiful Islam, hall provosts and deans unanimously during the oath conducted by Rafia Rezwan, a student of 17th batch of mechanical engineering department.

'We will uproot all the cultures of discrimination and misuse of power...we will together ensure that no more life will be lost and no student will become victim of torture anymore,' they said.

'I, being a member of the BUET family, am promising that I'll discharge all my duties bestowed upon me individually, collectively, ethically and humanitarially with utmost honesty and integrity for the welfare of all and for the safety of all,' they swore in the packed auditorium.

Several hundred students standing outside the auditorium in queues also joined the oath.

Before taking oath, one-minute silence was observed for Abrar, who was tortured to death by a group of leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League at his dorm on October 7 early hours.

Abrar, a second-year student of BUET's electrical and electronics engineering department, was tortured to death reportedly for his critical views on social media over the recently signed deals between Bangladesh and India.

After the oath-taking, the students said they would continue pressing for realising their demands.

'We are ending our street agitation, but we will still avoid academic activities until all the accused students linked to the murder of Abrar are not rusticated,' said Md Sayem of the electrical and electronic engineering department, on behalf of the agitating students.

BUET vice-chancellor Saiful Islam said they would rusticate the accused students once the police pressed the charge-sheet into the murder case.

'I support all the demands of the students. We will implement the demands at the earliest,' he said.

After six-day protest, the students relaxed their agitation on Saturday after the BUET vice-chancellor and other teachers requested them to withdraw their movement in view of the admission tests, held on Monday.

The BUET students have been agitating for realising their 10-point demands including rustication of the killers of Abrar from the university, capital punishment to them, compensation to Abrar's family, bearing the family expenses for running the case, speedy trial of the case, making the charge sheet public, rustication from the university of all those involved in torturing students in the past and banning organisation-based student politics at BUET.

In the face of the agitation, the BUET authorities on Saturday issued five separate notices announcing a ban on organisation-based politics, conducting drives against illegal occupants at the dormitories and sealing off the student organisation offices on the campus, introducing a web portal where students could file complaints about any kind of abuse.

Police so far arrested 20 accused students linked to the murder of Abrar, including 15 of 19 listed accused mentioned in the first information reports.

On Wednesday, the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Morshed Al Mamun Bhuyan placed ASM Nazmus Sadat, a student of mechanical engineering of BUET and listed accused in the first information report, on 5-day remand after police produced him before the court seeking 10-day remand.