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JU closed after BCL attack on protesters

Ershad Kamol with Saiful Islam at JU | Updated at 11:54pm on November 05, 2019



Jahangirnagar University was closed for an indefinite period on Tuesday after Chhatra League 'cadres' allegedly assaulted protesters injuring 36 teachers and students.

The agitators were demonstrating in front of the residence of vice-chancellor Farzana Islam on the campus demanding her resignation for alleged corruption.

Following an emergency syndicate meeting chaired by Farzana Islam at her registrar building office in the noon, the university authorities asked the students to vacate the student halls by Tuesday evening, reads a release issued by JU acting registrar Rahima Kaniz.

The release also requested the police authorities to deploy 300 police personnel on the campus from Tuesday night anticipating further deterioration of the situation.

The sudden decision on vacating the dormitories put in serious difficulty many general students from different districts of the country.

'Where will we go in such a short period?' asked Md Jubair Newaz, a second-year student of finance and banking.

Defying the authorities' decision, many students stayed on in their dormitories.

They also brought out a procession from the campus medical centre in protest against the decision on closing the university to save 'a corrupt vice-chancellor'.

The agitators, who had been demanding a judicial inquiry since August 23 into the reported involvement of the vice-chancellor in corruption and mismanagement over a Tk 1,445-crore development project fund, were also trying to convince the students not to leave the dormitories.

The protesting students blocked many Dhaka-bound buses meant to leave the campus, reports JU correspondent.

Four teachers resigned from the Jahangirnagar University teachers association in protest against the BCL attack on students and teachers.

The incident took place two days after a seven-member delegation of the agitating teachers on Sunday met the education minister Dipu Moni at her residence in the capital for removal of the VC.

Students and activists at different places in the country protested against the assault on demonstrating teachers and students of Jahangirnagar University.

Dhaka university students, led by central students union vice-president Nurul Huq Nur, brought out a procession on the campus demanding punishment for the BCL cadres who made the attack.

The Bangladesh Chhatra Union also brought out a protest procession on the DU campus while the Bangladesh Chhatra Federation, the Socialist Students Front and the Jasad Chhatra League in separate statements demanded punishment for the attackers.

At Shahbagh in the capital on Tuesday evening, JU economics professor Anu Muhammad and DU international relations teacher Tanjimuddin Khan at a protest rally comprising people from all walks of life before the Bangladesh National Museum demanded punishment for the BCL activists responsible for the assault and immediate removal of JU VC.

Expressing solidarity with the JU protesters, the Ganosamhati Andolan in a written statement, issued jointly by its chief coordinator Zonayed Saki and executive coordinator Abul Hasan Rubel, also demanded punishment for the attackers and removal of what they said the corrupt vice-chancellor.

In Rajshahi, police arrested a private North Bengal University student from a protest rally in front of the Rajshahi University gate on the Rajshahi-Dhaka highway protesting the incident, our RU correspondent reported.

He said that three others were injured during the police attack.

Students, parents and teachers expressed concern also over the recent unrests in several other public universities.

On November 1 following a clash between two groups of students, Khulna University of Engineering and Technology authorities closed the university for an indefinite period.

On November 2, BCL activists threw Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute principal Farid Uddin Ahammed into a pond of the institute allegedly for rejecting their demand for allowing two BCL members to sit for examination even though they had not attended classes as required.

The students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology have been boycotting classes and examinations demanding permanent expulsion of the BCL members who killed student Abrar of the university in October and framing charges against them in the murder case.

Besides, demonstrations were held at Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Pabna University of Science and Technology and other educational institutions on various issues.

Jahangirnagar University teachers and students told New Age JU correspondent that about one hundred BCL activists on Tuesday morning attacked the demonstrators with sticks, rods and bricks leaving some 28 students, including three university-based reporters, and eight teachers injured.

Professor Sayed Ferdous, Professor Shamima Sultana, Professor Jamal Uddin Runu, Professor Rayhan Rayine, Professor Mirza Taslima Sultana, Professor Anwarullah Bhuiya, Professor Najmul Hasan Talukder were injured in the assault.

Witnesses said that JU Chhatra League unit president Jewel Rana, vice-presidents Nahid Hossain and Bayzid Rana, organising secretary Abishek Mandal led the attack to free the confined vice-chancellor from her residence.

Anthropology department professor Sayed Ferdous taking part in the agitation said, 'BCL goons attacked participants of our peaceful movement on instructions from some VC-backed teachers'.

Teachers and employees of the university backing the VC, led by Professor Bashir Ahmed of government and politics department and AA Mamun of physics department, tried to disperse the demonstrating teachers and students, witnesses said.

Agitating teachers and students under the banner of 'Jahangirnagar against Corruption' on Monday night had confined the vice-chancellor Farzana Islam to her residence to press for her exit from her position.

In the evening, over one hundred protesters brought out a procession from the old administrative building of Jahangirnagar University and later took position in front of the vice-chancellor's residence.

The protesters vowed to continue the sit-in until their demand was met.

JU BCL president Jewel Rana denied that they attacked the protestors.

He claimed that they went to the place after getting information that some Islami Chhatra Shibir cadres had joined the protesters in front of the VC's residence.

JU proctor ASM Firoz ul Hasan said, "We will take action against the attackers if we get any complaints.'

JU VC Farzana Islam, however, thanked BCL leaders and activists for their action terming it a mass uprising of general students.

Education minister Dipu Moni, who on Sunday told a group of JU teachers that Farzana Islam would be removed if found guilty, could not be contacted as she was visiting India.



Chhatra League leaders and activists beat up a student during an attack on protesting students, who laid siege to Jahangirnagar University vice-chancellor's residence, on the campus on Tuesday. — New Age photo

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