

KUET PROTESTS: Students ignore edn adviser's request, continue hunger strike

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The protesting students of the Khulna University of Engineering and Technology continued their hunger strike on Tuesday, disregarding the education adviser's request.

Education adviser Chowdhury Rafiqul Abrar on the day called on the protesting students to end their hunger strike, assuring them of taking initiatives soon to address the situation.

A high level representative team would soon visit the university to discuss solutions to the current impasse, he told them over phone, according to an education ministry press release.

A section of the students began hunger strike from Monday afternoon demanding removal of the university vice-chancellor, Professor Mohammad Mashud, for his alleged failure to provide security to the students and instigation to file cases against protesters and for temporarily expelling 37 students.

Till Tuesday 7:00pm, at least 26 students were on hunger strike, said the university's director of student welfare Professor Md Abdullah Elias Akhter.

On the day, the adviser talked over phone with some students staging the hunger strike, said the press release.

Expressing concern over the protesting students' health risk, the adviser requested them to withdraw their hunger strike, considering the hot weather.

The government was aware about the students' demand and would soon send a high level representative team to the university to have discussions with the authorities, teachers and students for solving the impasse, the adviser assured.

On April 20, the protesting students gave a 24-hour ultimatum to the government to remove the vice-chancellor.

As their demand remained unmet, 32 students started a hunger strike on the campus at about 3:00pm on Monday.

The student welfare director said that ignoring earnest requests from the teachers, most of them continued hunger strike as of Tuesday evening.

'By Tuesday evening six students have withdrawn hunger strike. Of them two are in hospital now,' he said, adding, 'medical team and ambulances are at the site ready for any emergency.'

New Age correspondent in Dhaka University reported that students of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology on Tuesday staged a protest in solidarity with the KUET students.

They marched from the university's Shaheed Minar at about 1:00pm and ended the march with a brief rally at the base of the Anti-Terrorism Raju Memorial Sculpture at Dhaka University.

Some BUET students also changed their Facebook profile pictures with hashtags like #BUETiansStandWithKUETians and #StandWithKUET.

The current situation began unfolding on April 13 when a probe committee submitted its report to the KUET authorities following a violent clash between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and the Students Against Discrimination on February 18 over a ban on student politics on the campus.

The clash left over 100 people injured.

Based on the report, the university, at its 101st syndicate meeting held on April 14, decided to temporarily expel 37 students for their involvement in the clash.

The decision triggered instant protests from the KUET students who started staging demonstrations on the campus from April 15, demanding the vice-chancellor's resignation.

Earlier on August 11, 2024, the university banned on-campus student politics, the decision of which was iterated on a February 19 announcement.

All academic activities of the university have remained suspended along with all its halls remaining closed since February 25 as the impasse continues.