

Kuet students break into closed halls

Demand VC's resignation after 37 students suspended

Agitating students of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet) yesterday entered five residential halls, breaking locks, protesting the authorities' decision to suspend 37 students and delay the reopening of dormitories.

They also issued a one-point demand, calling for the resignation of Vice Chancellor Prof Mohammad Mashud.



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Kuet has remained closed since a violent clash broke out on February 18 between activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and another group of students under the banner of 'general students' over the banning of student politics on campus. At least 40 people were injured in the violence.

On Monday night, Kuet's syndicate held an emergency meeting and decided to reopen the residential halls on May 2 and resume academic activities on May 4. It also decided to suspend 37 students for their alleged involvement in the clashes on February 18 and 19.

The students began breaking the locks around 2:00pm yesterday, starting with Fazlul Haque Hall, followed by Amar Ekushey Hall, Dr M A Rashid Hall, and two others.

By the time this report was filed at around 8:30pm, around 250 students were staying in those dormitories.

The students have been staging a sit-in protest since Sunday, demanding the immediate reopening of the halls.

Yesterday, around 1:00pm, the students brought out a procession and requested teachers to unlock the halls. However, the teachers did not respond.

Following this, the students issued a call for the VC's resignation.

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DU students protest in solidarity with KUET



The announcement was made at a press briefing held at the Kuet Student Welfare Centre around 1:45pm, where a student representative read out a written statement.

The statement read: "As the VC has failed to ensure the safety of Kuet students, refused to take responsibility for his failure, disconnected internet and water supply, forced students out of the halls, encouraged filing of cases against protesting students, and expelled demonstrating students, we are shifting from our previous six-point demand to a single-point demand. The removal of the VC is now our only demand."

Kuet's Public Relations Officer Shaheduzzaman Sheikh told The Daily Star that the decision to suspend the 37 students was based on findings from a probe committee.

Regarding the breaking of locks, Kuet VC Mohammad Mashud told journalists, "Breaking into the halls is an illegal act. I will place the matter before the syndicate, which will decide the next course of action."

Following the February 18 clash, students began boycotting classes and launched a movement with a six-point demand that included the resignation of the VC, Pro-VC, and the Director of Student Welfare, as well as a complete ban on student politics.

On February 23, students submitted their six-point demand in writing to the Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus. Later, on February 25, the Kuet syndicate decided to indefinitely suspend academic and administrative activities and ordered students to vacate the dormitories.

A three-member committee was subsequently formed by the university administration to investigate the incident.

On April 10, a local resident filed a case with a court in Khulna against 22 named Kuet students and 15–20 unnamed individuals in connection with the February 18 violence.

DU, BUET, RUET STUDENTS EXPRESS SOLIDARITY

At Dhaka University, students yesterday expressed their solidarity with the students of Kuet. Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad (BGCS) held a press conference at around 2:00pm at the Madhur Canteen and demanded the resignation of Kuet VC within 24 hours.

Another section of students under the banner of "Dhaka University Stands with Kuet" held a protest programme at around 4:00pm at the Raju Memorial Sculpture with similar demands.

At Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), students formed a human chain in protest of the recent actions taken by the Kuet administration.

During the protest held at the Central Shaheed Minar on the Buet campus yesterday afternoon, students demanded the immediate withdrawal of the case against Kuet students, accountability from the administration, and punishment of those responsible for the violence.

At Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet), students formed a human chain yesterday afternoon protesting the recent events at Kuet.

The demonstration took place at 5:30pm in front of the Ruet Shaheed Minar, where students raised slogans expressing solidarity with Kuet students and demanding justice.

[Our Correspondents from Khulna, Rajshahi and DU contributed to the report]