

# Kuet guardians urge education ministry to end prolonged stalemate

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As academic activities at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet) remain suspended for an unprecedented five months, mounting frustration and uncertainty have gripped over 7,500 students and their families.

Concerned by the prolonged stalemate, the Kuet Guardian Forum—comprising 30 guardians based in Dhaka—has stepped in, submitting a written statement to the education adviser, calling for the swift appointment of a vice-chancellor, resolve the ongoing crisis, and ensure the full resumption of academic and administrative activities.

"We humbly appeal to you to act without delay, to save the students from irreparable academic loss and relieve their families from this prolonged distress," the statement read.

Yesterday, representatives of the forum handed over the memorandum to the Ministry of Education. The delegation included Anwar Hossain, Hasan Julkar Nine, Md Jasim Uddin, and Bikash Kumar Shil among others.

In their written appeal, the guardians voiced deep concern over the prolonged closure of one of the country's most prestigious public engineering universities.

"Kuet has remained closed for over five months, halting all academic and administrative activities. Thousands of students are facing deep uncertainty about their future, and we, the guardians, are living in constant anxiety," according to the statement.

Highlighting the mental health toll on students, the forum noted, "In a country where a significant number of students take their own lives each year due to academic and familial pressure, this ongoing situation is unbearable. We are already scarred by the prolonged closures during the Covid-19 pandemic. Now, once again, our children are confined to their homes, leading miserable lives."

The memorandum also noted that students who began their university education in 2019 at institutions other than Kuet have already graduated, pursued PhDs, or entered the job market. "Had these past six months not been lost, many Kuet students could have embarked on their careers by now," it said.

The guardians warned of worsening session backlogs, a decline in the quality of research and engineering education, and damage to Kuet's academic reputation. "The inaction of the authorities is deeply disheartening. Kuet's standing in the international academic community is also being compromised," they said.

The academic activities at Kuet remain suspended, following violent clashes involving students and teachers on February 18.

In response to the unrest, the Ministry of Education removed then vice-chancellor Prof Muhammad Masud and pro-VC Prof Shariful Alam on April 25, appointing Prof Md Hazrat Ali of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology as interim VC on May 1.

However, he resigned on May 22, citing pressure and lack of support from the Kuet Teachers' Association.

Since then, both the VC and pro-VC posts have remained vacant, paralysing the university's administrative functions, including salary disbursements, project payments, and academic decisions, as the VC's signature is mandatory for all official transactions.