

KUET classes to resume Tuesday, official notice shortly

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Prof Md Maksud Helali, the newly appointed vice chancellor of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (KUET), has decided to resume academic activities from Tuesday, following two days of intensive discussions with stakeholders.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Prof Helali said, "I have just taken charge and spent the past two days speaking to stakeholders to understand the causes behind the ongoing stalemate at the university. I strongly believe that open dialogue can resolve many of these issues."

He added, "I have already spoken with teachers in the morning and student representatives in the afternoon. I will meet with the teachers' association this evening. Everyone I've talked to has been very positive, 100 percent supportive. Based on that, I have decided to reopen classes on Tuesday and will issue an official notice shortly."

Prof Helali also emphasised the need for proper coordination among campus security, academic activities, and administrative functions.

"That is why on Saturday morning, I held a meeting with officers from three neighbouring police stations. I urged them to ensure the safety of our students both on and off campus. Since then, I've also spoken to the deans of different departments."

General Secretary of the KUET Teachers' Association, Faruk Hossain, told The Daily Star, "We were waiting for the new VC to take charge. Now that he has, we are hopeful. Reopening classes is essential, and we trust that he will issue the official notice very soon."

"There's been disorder for a long time," he said.

"Wherever issues need to be addressed, the VC has shown his willingness to act. He's already held meetings with individual teachers, though not yet with the association formally. One of our key demands was restoring academic and administrative discipline as per university regulations, and he has assured us that the university will now function accordingly."

Around 11:00am yesterday, a coordination meeting was held in the university's administrative building with senior police officials.

Among those present were Prof Elias Akhtar, director of Student Welfare; Officer-in-charge Md Kabir Hossain (Khanjahan Ali Police Station); OC Mir Atahar Ali (Daulatpur Police Station); and OC Md Tuhinuzzaman (Aronghata Police Station).

In the meeting, the vice chancellor said, "Our aim is to establish KUET as a safe, disciplined, and quality higher education institution where teachers, students, officers, and staff can carry out their academic and research duties with dignity and peace of mind."

He stressed the importance of security, order, and proper coordination between academic and administrative functions.

He requested the cooperation of local law-enforcing agencies in ensuring full security for all students, including those living in rented accommodations outside the campus.

The police officials assured full cooperation in maintaining peace and security on and around the campus.

KUET has been closed for 160 consecutive days since February 18, when a clash broke out over demands to ban student politics, leaving over a hundred injured.

Amid growing protests, the government removed the then VC and pro-VC.

On May 1, CUET professor Hazrat Ali was appointed interim VC, but he resigned on May 22 following opposition from teachers.

Although the government published a notification on June 10 to appoint a permanent VC, the recruitment process saw no progress until last week.

In this context, the government appointed retired BUET Prof Helali as KUET's new vice chancellor on Thursday (July 24).

He formally joined the university the following day by reporting to the administrative building on Friday.