

# BSU condemns attempt to rehabilitate JU pro-vc amid allegation of backing attack on students

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The Bangladesh Students Union on Monday condemned a decision by Bangladesh Jasad to present Jahangirnagar University pro-vice-chancellor Sohel Ahmed as a speaker at a national convention of left-leaning parties, calling the move an attempt to rehabilitate a figure accused of political persecution and abuses under the Awami League administration.

In a statement signed by the president Tamzid Haider Chanchol and general secretary Shimul Kumbhakar on Monday, the organisation said giving a platform to what it described as 'one of the key collaborators of authoritarian rule', was unexpected and regrettable.

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The Student Union accused professor Sohel of directing Bangladesh Chhatra League activists during attacks on teachers and students at the university during its 2019 anti-corruption movement.

The convention, held on November 29 and jointly organised by the Left Democratic Alliance and Bangladesh Jasad, declared the formation of a new ‘Democratic United Front’.

The Bangladesh Students Union, which attended as an invited organisation, welcomed efforts to build a broader democratic coalition but criticised Jasad for hosting professor Sohel.

The student organisation said professor Sohel was among those behind the expulsion of two of its central leaders—Amartya Ray and Riddho Anindya Ganguly, then president and general secretary of the JU unit—and was involved in attempts to bring sedition charges against them.

They also alleged that Sohel had appeared as a guest at events organised by Jamaat-e-Islami's student wing and other right-wing groups, and that he recently played a role in cancelling Amartya Roy's candidacy in the disputed JUCSU election while holding a top administrative post.

‘Allowing this individual—who labelled progressive student activists as Shibir, orchestrated unjust expulsions and oversaw repression under the previous regime—to speak on a stage meant to build broad democratic unity undermines our long struggle,’ the statement said.

The leaders further criticised what they called an earlier attempt by the post-uprising university administration to ‘reward’ Sohel with the pro-vc position.

They said his previous engagements with groups opposed to the values of the Liberation War, raised additional concerns.

They called on political forces claiming the legacy of the Liberation War and the July mass uprising to apply ‘rigorous scrutiny and the utmost caution’ when forming alliances.