

Gauhati University VC resigns over government apathy

Gauhati University Vice Chancellor Amarjyoti Choudhury has resigned alleging indifference on the part of the Assam government in running the premier institution - a move that has shocked intellectuals and students here.

'The government's attitude towards the functioning of the university forced Professor Choudhury to relinquish office. We are deeply hurt although we are with him as he did not succumb to the government's nasty politics,' said N.R. Das, president of the Gauhati University Teachers' Association.

Choudhury tendered his resignation Saturday saying the government paid no heed to various demands for the smooth functioning of the university.

'There are several burning issues, including early release of 10 percent arrear dues to teachers and employees, enhancement of retirement age of teachers and creation of a corpus for pensioners, which need to be addressed immediately.

'But the government has paid no heed to solve these issues forcing teachers to take the path of agitation,' Choudhury said in a statement citing reasons for his resignation.

He said the government's decision to raise the tuition fees of students to run the university was not acceptable to him.

'A large number of students are from lower middle class families and the decision by the government asking the university to raise the tuition fees to meet the salaries of the employees was not acceptable. I don't want the university to suffer for me,' Choudhury said.

Students and intellectuals have lashed out at Assam Education Minister Ripun Bora for forcing Choudhury to resign.

'On various platforms the education minister criticised the vice chancellor although Prof Choudhury virtually revived the university from ruins when he took over in 2006,' said D. Nath, a leader of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU).

'Such issues if not resolved would vitiate the academic environment. It is unfortunate the government paid no heed to the VC's suggestions,' said D. Dutta, a retired college teacher.

Choudhury said he would prefer to remain a teacher and would like to continue his role as a faculty member in the Tezpur University in northern Assam.

There has been no immediate reaction from the Assam government so far.

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