

DU budget allocation likely to shrink

Varsity Correspondent

The coming fiscal year's budgetary allocation to Dhaka University is likely to shrink slightly, despite the growing demand for more investment in education and research for building quality human resources.

Official sources said the allocation for the 2002-2003 fiscal year would stand at an amount of Taka 86.25 crore, still Taka 25 lakh less than that of the budget of the last fiscal.

The DU authorities are set to announce the annual budget in a special session of the university Senate, the highest executive body, scheduled for June 17, according to officials.

The Dhaka University authorities have sought Taka 100 crore to the University Grants Commission (UGC), which deals financial matters of all the public universities. The university experiences a budget deficit of more or less Taka 10 crore.

However, the dip in the coming FY's allocation is contrary to the government's, specially the Finance Minister's, public pledges for making increasing spending for education and research.

Yet the lion's part of the amount, agreed by the UGC, would be spent for payment of salaries of the teachers, officers and employees. The development and other sectoral allocation are yet to be finalised.

Only an insignificant portion of the budget is meant for conducting research activities in the university, which, in the preamble of relevant ordinance, had the main purpose of "education and research".

In spite of the Finance Minister's recent directive for increasing the universities' own sources of funding, it is highly unlikely that the authorities would be able to raise the tuition or other fees in view of possible repercussion involved with such politically touchy issue.

Instead, the authorities are now in search of new areas of generating internal revenue and as such decisions were taken to use the university swimming pool and other installations on commercial basis. They are considering building some commercial markets on the university-owned lands to generate more revenue.

In the Senate's budget session, likely to be held on June 17, a panel for electing the Vice Chancellor might be formed. Present VC Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury was nominated by the Chancellor in last October under the General Clauses Act, 1897.

He has now been desperate to have an electoral legitimacy and as per the university statute the Vice Chancellor shall be appointed from the panel elected by the Senate.

