

DU sex-scandal

Probe body submits report

Varsity Correspondent

The probe body investigating the alleged case of sexual harassment by a teacher of Dhaka University submitted its final report on Sunday evening to the Registrar of the university. The report will be published at the Syndicate meeting today (Monday).

The report will be accompanied by some recommendations to help the authorities to take necessary steps. The contents and recommendation of the official report could not be learnt.

However, university sources said that the alleged teacher might be identified guilty in the report and urge the authorities to take action against the teacher as per rule.

The probe body, headed by Prof. Shahadat Ali, has finally come up with the report after 40 days of its formation after failing to meet the deadline twice. A total of 17 persons were interviewed during this period, sources said.

Earlier on November 30, a female student of Public Administration Department in a written complaint to the Vice-Chancellor alleged that a teacher of International Relations Department had sexually harassed her on the previous day.

Sources said that the Masters student was accompanied by her mother when she went to lodge the complaint to the VC. She alleged that the incident had taken place at the office of the Professor in the Arts Building when she went there to discuss studies with the teacher.

However, the alleged teacher denied the allegations saying that it was totally a family affair, and the university authorities had nothing to do with it.

University authorities formed a probe body on December 1 to investigate into the matter. The probe body was asked to submit its report within 15 days, but it failed to do so.

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Probe body

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Later, Prof. Shahed Uddin, the alleged teacher, was temporarily suspended.

This issue of sex-scandal triggered massive protest and anger among a section of students, mainly female students. They started a movement under the banner of "student against sexual harassment" on December 9.

"These students, mainly from some left leaning student organisations, are claiming themselves as representatives of the general students."

At the end of December, a counter group, emerged and existed for only a few days.

Both the rival groups even burnt the effigies on the campus. The "students against sexual harassment" burnt the effigy of the 'sexual offender' while the rival group, under the banner of 'conscious students', burnt the effigy of the 'Garments and NGO workers' which actually indicated the other group.

The "conscious students" blamed their rivals for tarnishing the image of the university. The "conscious students" also alleged that the demonstrating students were backed by some NGOs.

The movement of the 'student against sexual harassment' took a new dimension when some university teachers and intellectuals along with some political and socio-cultural organisations expressed solidarity with them.

This section of students is still carrying on their movement to compel the authorities to implement their six-point demand. Their demands include setting up of a complaint cell in the university where students may lodge their complaints regarding sexual harassments.

The student organisations active in the university waited for the submission of the report of the probe body as the authorities repeatedly requested all to refrain from any kind of movement before the probe body finishes its work.

Meanwhile, the Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikya on Sunday announced that it would gherao the venue of the Syndicate meeting today (Monday).

The gherao programme will start at 11:30 am and last until the submission of the report.

The programme was announced from a sit-in demonstration held in front of the office of the Vice Chancellor on Sunday.