

## Cloud Over TSC's Cultural Role

The recently formulated guidelines for management of the Teachers Students Centre (TSC) of the University of Dhaka has reportedly brought an abrupt end to the mainstream cultural activities there. What is intriguing is the failure of the authorities to make those guidelines public even though one and a half months have passed after their adoption. Yet this has not been a hindrance for the authority to cancel the allocation of rehearsal rooms to some parties and grant fresh permission for use of rooms to others.

The report has been categorical that a number of progressive organisations which used to enjoy the facilities of the TSC for rehearsal and cultural promotion have been ousted. At the same time a particular organisation with the make-up of an NGO has been favoured instead. This is a serious allegation that calls for impartial investigation into the matter.

No doubt that rooms of the TSC were misused or illegally occupied for years for purposes other than the intended ones in the past. In the light of this, the introduction of policies or guidelines for management of the establishment cannot be unjustified. But one must expect that the new guidelines were aimed at doing away with the mismanagement and the undesirable incidents of the past.

Sure enough, there has been a cultural backlash all over the country. Ever since the new government's installation there has been an attempt—both overt and covert—to rewrite history and redefine culture. The controversy over the Bangalee and Bangladeshi is yet to be resolved. There is no knowing how long this debate will continue and weigh heavily on the nation. We will not be surprised if the guidelines for TSC management have been part of the re-evaluation process of our culture.

That the TSC has long been a cultural cradle in the same way Dhaka University has been a seat of learning and political grooming for many is undeniable. Both the university and the TSC have nurtured a glorious tradition of secular and progressive thoughts and aspirations. We would not imagine that tradition will have a break for any decision of the university authority.

No denying the fact that murky politics has already vitiated the atmosphere of the 'once Oxford of the East'. It is not for nothing that the question of banning student politics at the university has been gaining momentum. The TSC was more or less free from politicisation although the same cannot be said about muscle-flexing. Now all this may change if complaints made in the report carried in a Bangla daily are found substantial. Let no decision vitiate the atmosphere of the TSC on the line of partisan politics. Culture and history can never be tailor-made. Both evolve through a long process of civilisation.

It has been reported that the new occupiers of the rehearsal rooms have left those under lock and key. Why? Because they have no cultural activity to pursue. What a tragedy! The genuinely committed cultural activists have been shown the door and those who have nothing better to do than putting the rooms under lock and key have been allotted the possession. Such tunnel vision will serve no one's purpose. Only the cultural activists will suffer for no fault of their own. No reason however to think that this will stop them from pursuing their avowed goal or objectives.