

Probe body report on violence

# Neutral VC, CU Act amendment suggested

The one-man Enquiry Commission, headed by Mr. Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, on Chittagong University violence has suggested steps for review and amendment of the Chittagong University Act, 1973, and appointment of a neutral person as the Vice-Chancellor, reports BSS.

The Commission said that the provisions of the existing Act are such that no Vice-Chancellor can remain neutral in the campus and that he has to seek support before his appointment from some groups of teachers and students who ultimately create problem for him and his administration.

The 304-page report of the Commission submitted to the Government recently was released to the Press on Tuesday.

The Commission made an enquiry into the campus violence on December 22, 1990, in the Chittagong University campus, which led to the

death of one student and injuries to a large number of teachers and students including female students.

The report was prepared on the basis of evidences of a cross-section of people and inquiry into the events leading to campus violence.

In the terms of reference, the Commission was asked to find out the circumstances behind the unfortunate incidents of December 22 and afterwards.

The Commission was also asked to identify the persons responsible for the clash, terrorism and attempt to murder during the period. It was also asked to suggest effective measures against recurrences of such incidents.

The Commission, in its report, recommended that the university teachers should not take "any direct or indirect part" in national and student politics to keep the university campus free from violence.

The Commission has pleaded for formulation of a code of conduct for

the university teachers for this purpose.

The Commission identified "groupings and ego amongst the teachers including the Vice-Chancellor and their indirect instigation of the students for the December 22 incident and its afterwards happenings".

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## Report

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Discussing the role of the teachers, the Commission said that they should be barred from soliciting support of the students to secure "something" from the University Administration.

It said, "in the present occurrence, the facts and circumstances indicate that the Executive Committee of the Teachers' Association sought the support of the teachers and other employees in their movement against the Vice-Chancellor for his alleged act of corruption, nepotism, favouritism, regionalism, collaboration with the Ershad regime, etc."

The Commission recommended faculty-wise residential halls and allotment of seats strictly on the basis of merit. It suggested strict avoidance of regional quota and political considerations in the allotment of seats.

The Commission said, the system

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of "doubling" with allotted seat-holders should strictly be avoided and only the regular students should be allowed to stay in the residential halls.

The Commission, in its report, said the union activities should be confined among the regular students of the university and the irregular students should not be allowed to participate in the hall or in the CU-CSU elections.

The Commission said, the University Administration should always remain neutral and should take timely and appropriate disciplinary action against any act of indiscipline either by students or by teachers. "If the University Administration is able to shun their partisan approach there cannot be any such occurrences that took place on December 22", it added.

The Commission in its report also mentioned that the news media more particularly those of Chittagong had flashed the occurrence of December 22 in a partisan way. "From their report they indicated that the culprit behind the occurrence was Islami Chhatra Shibir who assaulted certain teachers and the students but they had not given the other side of the picture. Holding the grouping of the teachers responsible "solely" and "wholly" for the occurrence, the Commission viewed that it was the teachers who from behind the scene pulled the strings which resulted in the incident.

Terming the attitude of the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Alamir Mohammad Serajuddin as "questionable", the Commission viewed that the Vice-Chancellor ought to have been more careful and vigilant when there was a movement for his removal which was being supported by a strong student organisation.

The Commission contended that instead of being vigilant, the Vice-Chancellor allowed the situation to go beyond control. "Had he taken timely action in the matter, there would not have been any occurrence resulting in the death of a student and injury to some teachers and the students", it added.

The Commission in its report said, it is true that some students participated in the occurrence causing injuries to several persons. It has to be looked into as to who instigated them or who were behind the occurrence, the report added.

The report further said, "it will be unfair to blame only the students. The teachers who participated in the procession and the office bearers of the Teachers' Association should also share the responsibilities of the occurrence".

Terming the existing situation of the Chittagong University campus "abnormal", the Commission viewed that the purpose for which the students were sent to the university is bound to be frustrated if the attitude of the teachers does not change.

Regarding the allegations of nepotism, corruption and other irregularities brought against the Vice-Chancellor by some teachers, the Commission said, "It is not within the scope of this Commission." The Commission, however, suggested to the Chancellor to appoint a high powered committee to look into the allegations made against the Vice-Chancellor. "This will be of much help in restoring normalcy in the atmosphere of the university", the report added.