

Vibrant campus can keep students from militancy

VCs of public universities tell view-exchange meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vice-chancellors of the country's public universities yesterday called for restoring healthy student politics and arranging more extracurricular and cultural activities on the campuses to prevent students from getting involved in militancy.

Divisions among teachers over many issues, weak teacher-student relation and teachers' failure to create role models may drive the students to the wrong path, they said.

Apart from increasing monitoring on their students, the faculties will have to spend more time with them, nurture their leadership qualities and help them become dreamers, they said.

The VCs made the remarks at a view-exchange meeting organised jointly by the education ministry and the University Grants Commission at International Mother Language Institute in the capital.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid also spoke at the programme, held as part of the government's campaign against militancy.

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Vibrant campus

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Earlier on July 17, the home and education ministries held a meeting with the teachers and students of the private universities against the backdrop of some students' involvement in militancy.

"The universities used to be the main centres of cultural activities and sports but those decreased after 1975," said Rajshahi University VC Prof Muhammad Mizanuddin. "The practices came down drastically in recent times."

He said, "We all need to do some soul-searching. Have we created the role models before students? Have we been able to instil leadership qualities into students?"

When teachers should work together to spread the spirit of Liberation War among the students, they are pulling legs of one other, he alleged.

Prof Mizan said teachers and non-partisan students do not want to get in touch with student organisations that commit "extortions".

Echoing his view, Jahangirnagar University VC Prof Farzana Islam said existing unhealthy student politics on the campus is not helpful for nation building.

She also said teachers would not be able to guide students in the right direction as long as they remain "corrupt" and busy earning money by teaching outside.

National University VC Prof Harun-or-Rashid said the VCs have responsibilities to cooperate with the government in every possible way. "Otherwise, they should step down."

He said the UGC should play a more pro-active role rather than just visiting an institution and taking steps after an incident.

Kamrul Hasan Khan, vice-chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, said the university authorities themselves will have to take steps to introduce more cultural and extracurricular activities to keep students busy in positive work in their leisure time.

It is high time the VCs worked together without being divided over political and personal gains, he said.

ASM Maksud Kamal, general secretary of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association, urged VCs not to recruit teachers who have links with Jamaat-Shibir.

He also recommended monitoring the coaching centres.

UGC Chairman Prof Abdul Mannan urged all VCs to form human chains at their respective public universities on August 1 to mark one month of Gulshan cafe tragedy.

Speaking as the chief guest, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said the force that opposed the country's independence is now trying to carry out militant activities afresh. This force has created militant organisations at different times under different names, he said.

"Once they emerged as Harkatul Jihad, then again as JMB and Ansarullah Bangla Team somewhere," he said, adding the same force is now trying to emerge under the name of IS.

The home boss urged the VCs to forge a social movement against the derailed youths. "Their number is very insignificant and so we'll be victorious in this war."

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said, "You [the teachers] will have to know your students well. You will have to inspire your students to engage in positive and creative work."

The minister also said some so-called teachers are involved in militant activities and trying to misguide students. "They are being hunted for. They will not be spared."

Nahid said anti-militancy cells comprising teachers, guardians and local residents will be formed at all educational institutions immediately.

Others who spoke include Buet VC Prof Saiful Islam, Chittagong University VC Iftekhar Uddin Chowdhury, Barisal University VC SM Imamul Huq, Bangladesh Agricultural University VC Md Ali Akbar, Education Secretary Sohorab Hossain and Senior Home Secretary Mozammel Haque Khan.

Pro-VCs and senior teachers of the universities attended the event.