

Univs without proper campuses injustice to students



TWENTY-TWO of the 56 public universities, two of which are yet to begin their academic activities, are yet to have their own campuses. Many of the 22 universities began their academic activities more than a decade ago. Unlike private universities which need to move to their own campuses within seven years after they are founded, public universities are meant to begin their academic activities after their academic and administrative infrastructure is established. The rule has not been followed in the universities set up after 2008, during the Awami League's tenure, and they continue to run their overall activities in rented spaces. The Rangamati Science and Technology University, founded in 2014, however, says that it had moved to its permanent campus in 2019, but the University Grants Commission is not updated on this. Yet, being set up in 2014 and moving to its own campus five years later also constitutes a violation of the rule. A situation like this prevents the 22 universities from offering a fully-fledged academic environment for the students. As they run with bare minimum facilities under makeshift arrangements, the students enrolled there are denied what the universities should have offered.

Experts seek to say, and this is also anybody's guess, that universities running in rented buildings and spaces offer substandard education as they fail to offer a proper academic environment for the students. Universities are centres for excellence in knowledge creation; and, universities plagued by inadequate facilities, short-handed human resources and poor infrastructure cannot, as experts believe, produce the level of graduates they are meant to produce. Educationists largely say that the  political gains that the Awami League aimed for have been at the centre of the delay in readying the university infrastructure. But some seek to blame bureaucratic complexities and political turmoil for the situation that the 22 public universities are mired in. That the Awami League hurried the establishment of the universities to curry political gains, even through nepotism that has been observed in the recruitment, well holds water, but the excuse of bureaucratic complexities and political turmoil appears to be untenable as the academic and administrative infrastructure could not be built even in a decade in the case of some universities. The government should, in such a situation, of course, investigate the issue of nepotism and political favouritism and hold to account all the individuals and entities found guilty.

But unless the government acts in earnest and early on completing the infrastructure, both academic and administrative, and the human resources required for the universities, it would be further withholding what the universities are meant to provide for the students. This would be an injustice on part of the government to the students. And this would defeat the very purpose for which the universities were established.