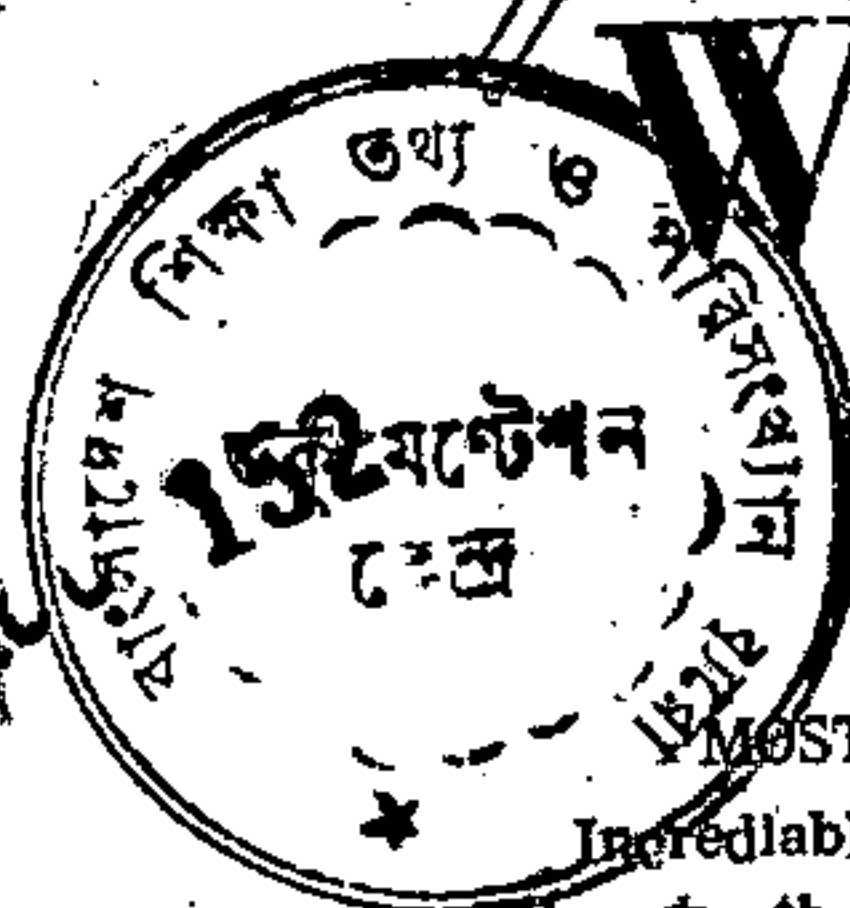


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Will stalemate over BBA course end

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Incredible it may sound though, the question of opening the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) course in Dhaka University is now being opposed openly by certain quarters.

Last week when the University Academic Council met to consider, among other things, the opening of the course, a demonstration was staged and memorandum submitted by the 'Faculty of Commerce Action Council' against the initiative.

The question of opening BBA course at the Institute of Business Administration remains stalemated since December 1987 when the universities authorities asked for postponement of admission formalities even though about 4300 students had applied to get themselves admitted after the course was advertised.

It was argued at that time that IBA had not fulfilled procedural obligations while advertising the course last year—the Board of Governors, the policy making body of IBA, and the university Academic Council had not okayed the proposal.

The new opposition has come following the unanimous adoption of the proposal by the IBA Board of Governors headed by the University Vice-Chancellor on October 31, and its inclusion in the agenda of the Academic Council meeting that was held between November 2 and 8.

The Academic Council could not discuss the question because it was at the bottom of

the agenda of the 7-day-long meeting. Meanwhile, with the announcement of the results of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations of 1988 it is time for the start of a new academic session.

An IBA source told this reporter that the question of opening of the BBA course is not a sudden development. It is the outcome of years of systematic efforts made keeping in view the country's need for efficient business managers, and also the attainment of self-sufficiency in business management education.

The IBA since its establishment in 1968 is running a master's programme by admitting graduates from all other disciplines. But the percentage of pass varies between 20 and 35 causing a huge wastage. As the students are drawn from different disciplines at the post-graduate level the institute gets only those boys who make MBA programme their second choice. In Bangladesh students decide their choice of the field of specialisation after completing the HSC level.

The IBA source said, they could not increase the percentage of pass because of their concern for quality education which has contributed to the turning of IBA into an institute of repute not only in Bangladesh but also abroad. At present students from Maldives, Nepal, India and some other countries are getting admitted to the MBA course. The source said that the ground level preparation of students to complete MBA programmes will be better if admissions were made also at the gradu-

ate level. At present the institute has master's and doctoral programmes, but no BBA programme. Many Bangladeshi students go abroad each year to study BBA because of this, he said.

Quoting from an ILO survey of 1976-77 he said that only about 1.5 per cent of the 16,000 business managers in public sector enterprises had the required qualifications, and only 14 per cent of them had undergone management training. Another survey conducted by the World Bank in 1982 showed that the country would need a supply of another 14,000 business managers by 1990. Only 40 per cent of the demand could be met by graduates from the commerce faculties of the universities. If qualified manpower was not created to meet the demand, he posts would have to be filled up by non-qualified persons.

The IBA source said that the institute would require no new fund for opening of the course because it already had the physical and academic facilities to run the new course. Besides a one million Canadian dollar worth of collaboration of IBA with a Canadian university is in the pipeline for the purpose.

Against this backdrop the points raised in opposition to the course include: opening of the course would create misunderstandings about the qualifications of commerce graduates, it would lead disparity creating a handful of fortunate business graduates, this would call for unnecessary allocations to IBA etc. The 'Faculty of Commerce action council' in its memorandum thus demanded stopping of BBA course, increase of allocations to the Faculty of Commerce, unification of IBA and Commerce Faculty courses to offer similar degrees etc.

The IBA source said most of these points are either irrelevant or untrue. He said that M.Com and MBA degrees were being offered for the last two decades without the creation of any misunderstanding. The course curricula and the methods of instruction were completely different and thus the question of misunderstanding did not arise. He said that IBA got much lesser allocation than the faculty of commerce from the university budget. However, IBA arranged funds from local as well as overseas donors to smoothly run its programmes.

The source said that the Dean of the Commerce Faculty and the chairmen of the four departments under it who are represented in the IBA Board of Governors, never opposed the initiative to open IBA courses. It is surprising that the course is being opposed even though it would expand higher education facilities, he added.