

Private universities flouting rules

UGC must take stern action

It is disappointing to note that a great many private universities are violating the conditions and rules set out by the Private University Act-2010, despite repeated reminders from the University Grants Commission (UGC) to comply with the provisions. For instance, only 17 of the 52 private universities which were supposed to move to their own campuses have not done so, even though the September 15 deadline – the third deadline so far – for universities to relocate is fast approaching.

While private institutions for graduate and post-graduate learning were a dire necessity, these have been sprouting up all over the country in crammed buildings with no breathing-space, lacking standard classrooms, libraries or laboratory facilities. This is not conducive to learning. It is important to understand that the universities are not commercial ventures and that their main objective is to provide quality education; as such, it is imperative that they invest in infrastructure that boosts the overall university experience of students.

What is also of concern is that the quality of education in many of these private institutions remain sub par. A distressing number of universities invest little or no money in research and lack enough qualified teachers, run as they are, for the most part, by part-time faculties.

It is encouraging that the UGC Chairman has, in a recent meeting, warned the universities of stern action if they fail to comply with the conditions of the Act. However, the UGC must properly monitor the activities of the private universities and deal with non-complying universities with a firm hand, to ensure that these institutes impart real education rather than dispense certificates only.