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### DU's Monumental Failure

Is university certificate a saleable commodity? Of course, it is. What happens in the country's other universities is not known but there is clear evidence that certificates are sold and bought at the premier university. It was an open secret that certificates and mark-sheets were obtainable for money. But not enough hard evidence could be gathered to point out accusing fingers at anyone. This time however a clear case of issuance of fake certificates and mark-sheets has been identified.

A Bangla daily has come up with a stunning report showing beyond doubt how a student of the Department of Applied Chemistry and Chemical Technology at Dhaka University had his B.Sc. (Hons) and M.Sc certificates as well as mark-sheets changed from second class to first class. He appeared at the 1994 M.Sc examination and actually obtained second class.

What is remarkable is that both the original M.Sc certificate and mark-sheet and the fake ones were issued on September 24, 1997 and January 15, 1998 respectively. Similarly, the date of issuance of B.Sc. (Hons) certificate is also same—November 26, 1995. So is the case with the issuance of the mark-sheets—the date of issuance for the original and the fake is same, that is June 1, 1996 and the serial numbers for the two are 82 and 83.

How this can happen is an intriguing question. It would be a folly to dismiss that only a section of the lower level university staff is involved in this most outrageous malpractice. If the signatures on the certificates and mark-sheets are not forged, the double issuance of the documents cannot escape detection. If they are a case of forgery, the culprits must have mastered the loathsome art to perfection. Now what the case really is should be made public after thorough investigation.

Earlier, we came across news about inquiries made by universities and employers abroad whether the certificates ex-students from Dhaka University submitted were authentic or not. A number of false cases were detected then. But not enough investigation was carried out to zero in on the culprit. No reason to think that the reported case is the only one of its kind. Knowledgeable quarters are convinced that the gang has been active for a long time and making millions of Taka out of this abominable practice.

It is quite unconvincing that the upper crust of the university administration failed to smell the rat. If they did not, they might either boast saintly quality or they themselves are part of the rogue gangs. Whatever the case may be, they have failed the nation any way. Heads should be rolling at the administrative building of Dhaka University as soon as it becomes clear who were directly or indirectly involved with the malpractice.

It is not for nothing that even a genuine meritorious student's performance is becoming suspect. A handful of culprits entrusted with a highly responsible job are bringing down the image of our nation both at home and abroad. This cannot be allowed to go on. The gang must be brought to book and given exemplary punishment. Moreover, a system of double-checking has to be introduced to ensure that no further fake academic certificate or mark-sheet is issued anywhere in the country.