

PRIVATE UNIVERSITY UGC to hold talks today on new act

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A new private university act is going to be formulated in a bid to stop malpractices of a section of private universities and ensure quality education in private universities.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) which is tasked with the job is going to hold a view-exchanging meeting today with the stakeholders concerned to place the act with recommendations before the government.

Vice-Chancellors of private universities, leaders of the Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh, eminent educationists, members of the Education Policy Formulation Committee, representatives of the Education Ministry, civil society members and other stakeholders concerned will attend

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 the meeting to give their opinions.

A total of 54 private universities are now operating in the country under the private university act and a section of them have allegedly been involved in malpractices like sales of certificates cashing in on loopholes of the existing act.

These so-called private universities are also alleged to be imparting substandard education.

Tasked with the job to ensure quality education of these universities, the UGC will place the draft act soon before the government after consultation with stakeholders concerned.

The UGC will scrutinise the opinions derived from the meeting and then forward it to the education ministry with its own suggestions and observations on the existing act, said sources.

"We have invited stakeholders concerned to the meeting for their opinions and we will scrutinise the opinions and make our observations on the act," UGC chairman Prof Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star.

"We will send it to the education ministry after finalising it and the ministry will do the rest," he added.

A timely private university act is needed for the sake of ensuring quality education in private universities, he said adding that the government has taken the matter very seriously.

Private universities came into operation in 1992 under the Private University Act 1992 that was later amended in 1998.

Following a proposal of the UGC to bring private universities under strict discipline the immediate past caretaker government promulgated the Private University Ordinance 2008.

"We are taking opinions of all concerned in this regard," he added.

As per the draft of the new act each private university will have a syndicate comprising VC, Pro-VC, treasurer, one dean, one departmental head and a member of academic council nominated by the VC, an educationist nominated by the government, three members nominated by the Board of Trustees and a member nominated by the UGC, said sources.

The law also suggests formation of a nine-member Board of Trustees for every university and the board will nominate a member from the board as its chairman, sources added.

One must have 20 years of teaching or administrative experience or 10 years of teaching and 10 years of administrative experience to be eligible to become a vice chancellor (VC), it says.

The proposal that each university will have to have Tk 5 crore deposited with any scheduled bank approved by the government as Reserve Fund, said sources.

But owners of the private universities opposed the move. The present government did not ratify the ordinance and so the ordinance became lapse.

At that time, the UGC strongly persuaded the education and law ministry not to drop the ordinance but owners of private universities lobbied against the move of the UGC.

Contacted, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said the government is planning to formulate a new act for private universities to ensure standard education.