

PROPOSED PRIVATE UNIVERSITY LAW

# Call for curtailing govt, UGC control

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Educationists, vice-chancellors (VC) of different private universities and civil society members yesterday appreciated the government's move to formulate a new private university act but urged to curtail the control of the government and the University Grants Commission (UGC) in the proposed act.

However, Private University Association strongly protested against the move saying that there is no need to formulate such new act to make the private universities a subordinate institution of the government and UGC.

The UGC held a view-exchanging meeting with the stakeholders in the city to get suggestions on the proposed act to be sent to the education ministry.

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## Private university

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The government directed the UGC to prepare a new act in the wake of allegations against many private universities of selling certificates and providing sub-standard education cashing in on loopholes of the existing act.

The discussants said the government as well as the UGC should not take so many monitoring responsibilities rather they should play their supportive role.

Educationist Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui said, a large scope to interfere in the university activities has been given to the government and UGC in the proposed act.

He suggested bringing amendments to sections of board of trustee, academic council, curriculum committee and teachers appointment committee in the proposed bill.

Prof Ajoy Roy said the private universities will be controlled by three authorities -- government, UGC and board of trustee-- if the act is formulated.

Syndicate should be the highest authority of a private university, he said adding the board of trustee should play a policymaking role and will not meddle in the internal affairs of the university.

Opposing the move, Abul Quasem Haider, vice-president of Private University Association, said the Private University Act 1992 amended in 1998 is sufficient to run the private universities.

"There is no need to formulate a new law as the development of private universities will be hampered severely if the new law is enacted," he said.

Conflict may arise between the syndicate and trustee board and accountability of the VCs will not be ensured in the proposed law, Haider added.

In fact, there is no provision in the bill to stop the alleged selling of certificates or other malpractices of the private

universities, he said.

North South University VC Prof Dr Hafiz GA Siddiqui suggested inclusion of a provision in the act so that the poor meritorious students can study in the private universities without any cost.

Dr A Mazid Khan, VC of University of Information Technology and Sciences (UITS), said there should be a specification of required space and land for establishing a private university.

UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said the government has taken the matter very seriously and a timely private university act is needed to ensure quality education in private universities though the owners' association had opposed it and still opposing it.

Establishing some new universities will be allowed soon outside Dhaka and the new act will help this process; the UGC chairman said adding some important suggestions came from this meeting would help make a balance in the proposed bill.

The UGC is likely to submit the draft act within a week, he added.

VCs and high officials of different universities also spoke at the meeting.