

A shame for all teachers

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an individual fails to ensure the protection of students and maintenance of discipline on the campus, but rather puts somebody in peril, he or she should not remain in that position, they observed.

The educationists and university teachers, including proctors, shared their views with The Daily Star following the assault of a female protester by BAU Proctor MA Salam on October 9.

Meanwhile, a three-member probe body formed by the BAU authorities, following the directive of Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid to investigate the incident, commenced its work yesterday.

In addition, the High Court yesterday stayed until November 15 a BAU decision that expelled nine students belonging to Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) on grounds of misbehaving with teachers for six months (one semester).

In response to a writ petition, the HC also issued a rule upon the university authorities to explain in three weeks why their decision to expel the students should not be declared illegal. It also directed the authorities to allow those students to participate in all examinations.

Prof Dr Abdur Rahman of Agronomy Department of Agriculture Faculty, who heads the probe committee, said the committee would talk to teachers and students, especially who were present on the spot, BAU administration and officials to make the investigation neutral.

Terming the act absolutely barbaric, noted educationist Syed Manzoorul Islam said, "Anyone who did such a thing cannot even remotely claim himself to be a teacher. It is utterly despicable and has put the whole teaching profession into shame."

The matter is not only against a female student; it could even be against a male as well, he said. "It is absolutely reprehensible and goes against the ethical norms and all cultural values of the country," said Islam a professor of English at Dhaka University.

A proctor faces many challenges and he or she should be calm and have a logical disposition toward handling hurdles, he said, adding that if anyone cannot handle this problem logically and instead applies force, should not be in this position.

The senior DU teacher

demanded a thorough judicial investigation and punishment of the person for this cowardly act. "Since an employee is also reportedly involved in the incident, thorough investigation is a must to reveal the facts and punishment should be meted out so that such acts are not replicated again," he added.

Former DU proctor Prof AKM Nurun Nabi finds no word to describe what kind of act it was, and observes that it can never be a teacher-like behaviour.

"Assaulting somebody physically is a punishable offence and what he did as a teacher is unethical and heinous act as well. Such an act cannot be acceptable from a proctor," he said.

Also the project director of population science department at DU, Nurun Nabi said, "A proctor is the custodian of discipline and how can he [the BAU proctor] maintain discipline when he is not a disciplined person himself?"

It is the duty of a proctor to ensure protection for a student exposed to danger, he added.

DU Proctor Prof MA Ali said a teacher, be he a proctor or in any other position, cannot rough up a student in anyway.

"The act is indecent and uncivilised," he said, adding that the duty of a proctor is to maintain discipline and peace and if any problem arises he or she should solve it through discussions.

Students are like their children and if anybody violates the law, the role of the proctor will be to take steps as per the University Act, said Prof Ali. "But such a thing [assaulting a student] is not desirable at all and cannot come under the law."

In a statement yesterday, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association censured the assault incident heavily and demanded punishment of the perpetrator-proctor and others for attacking the protesters.

Education Minister Nahid expressed deep shock over the incident and asked the BAU authorities to investigate it and take stern action against the people responsible.

University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof AK Azad Chowdhury expressed grave concern over the incident, saying that such acts cannot happen in a civilised country.

"We are monitoring what action the university takes after the investigation," he told The Daily Star.

Asked whether the UGC would probe the incident, he said the commission could not since it was an autonomous institution. But, he said, it will step in "if the university fails [to take action]".

Contacted, BAU Vice-Chancellor Prof Rafiqul Hoque said the university authorities would take punitive action against those found guilty in the probe.



PHOTO: TV GRAB

The proctor of Bangladesh Agricultural University punches a female student during a demonstration against admission fee hike on October 9. A Bangla daily published three photographs of the incident on Wednesday.

A shame for all teachers

Shocked educationists react to BAU proctor's assault on female student

STAR REPORT

Terming it a barbaric and uncivilised act, academics said yesterday that the proctor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) had put the entire teaching community into shame by assaulting a female student of his university.

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