

No foreign student at CU for 14 years

MD ABBAS, CU

The reserved seats for foreign students in Chittagong University have remained vacant for the last 14 years as no foreign student applied for admission since 2003.

According to the CU administration, there are 78 seats reserved for foreign students in every academic session.

Though there is no specific information about why foreign student enrolment dropped to zero, teachers of the university speculated about a number of possible reasons.

Wishing anonymity, a professor of public administration said the university authorities seemed not to be concerned about admitting foreign students at all.

International students need to know about the admission process and facilities, but there is no information regarding this on the CU website, he said.

CU Deputy Registrar SM Akbar Hossain said the reserved seats were distributed among six faculties and two institutes. Of the seats, 19 are in the arts and humanities faculty, 16 in biological sciences, 14 in social sciences, 12 in science, eight in

business administration, and two in law faculty, he said.

In the Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences, there are five reserved seats while the Institute of Marine Science and Fisheries has two reserved seats, he added.

In the 13 years from 1990 to 2003, only 19 Nepalese students enrolled at the forestry and environmental sciences institute -- 15 in honours and four in master's programmes -- according to the administration.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Khaled Mishbahuzzaman of the institute said foreign students lost interest in the university due to political unrest and session jams.

The university, on the other hand, could not attract them due to a negative image of Bangladesh and lack of promotion of the university, he added.

He also cited the lack of information on the university website as another reason.

Premier University Vice-Chancellor and former CU professor Anupam Sen said, "If CU can facilitate a good educational environment, scholarships, transport,

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and accommodation facilities apart from improving the quality of classes, foreign students will be interested."

He also said teachers' involvement in politics, their falling standards, and a lack of quality education were also among the reasons for the lack of interest.

CU Vice-Chancellor Prof Iftekhar Uddin Chowdhury said they were yet to formulate a policy on foreign students for which they could not update the website. "We are trying to solve the problems and would take necessary steps in this regard."

He, however, also emphasised the role of the government and the country's foreign missions abroad to attract foreign students.