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UGC RECOMMENDATION ON PUBLIC UNIVERSITY ADMISSION Written test along with MCQ

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The University Grants Commission has proposed introducing written examinations along with the existing multiple choice question in the admission tests for public universities.

The apex body of the country's higher education thinks that written exams would be a better measure of the writing and analytical skills of students and also help prevent ques-

tion paper leaks, said UGC officials.

"We want examinations that would test writing and analytical skills of the students and therefore, we are proposing to keep a big portion [of the exams] as written test, shortening the MCQ section," UGC Chairman Prof Abdul Mannan told The Daily Star.

He mentioned that in the MCQ question format, irregularities like question leaks for the admission test are easier. The questions get leaked just

at the beginning of the test due to the question pattern, he said.

"If the written test is introduced, students will have to write. We want our students to write," Mannan added.

The commission would soon send the aforementioned proposal, along with other recommendations, including establishing a research university, introducing uniform admission test for students' enrolment in public

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Written test

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universities and creating a teachers' database, to President and also Chancellor of universities, Abdul Hamid, said UGC officials.

Many universities used to follow the written test system to admit freshers in the late 80s.

According to the education ministry, there are 40 public universities in Bangladesh. Of them, 37 are fully operational, with a capacity of allocating seats for around 60,000 freshers.

The proposal for written tests comes amid widespread allegations of leak of question papers of the entrance tests of public universities in recent times. Some arrests have also been made in this connection.

The allegation of leak surfaced before the first-year honours admission test under "Gha" unit of Dhaka University on October 20.

A number of candidates had alleged that the questions of the English part were leaked eight hours before the test began and some admission seekers received e-mails containing the questions. Two Chhatra League leaders and an admission seeker at DU were arrested over the leaks.

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

UGC made a set of new recommendations in its annual report which will be submitted soon.

In the report, the UGC has suggested establishing a research university in the country immediately, with a view to producing world class faculties. This university will only offer PhD degrees and the researchers will focus on important socio-economic issues that are significant in national life.

The country's universities are not able to produce adequate human resources with higher degrees against the demand for them. The university, if set up, will also help solve the problem of lack of teachers with PhD degrees at public and private universities, said officials of the commission.

Like in previous years, the commission strongly recommended initiating uniform admission tests or cluster admission tests at public universities to ease the hassle of admission seekers and reduce the financial burden on the candidates.

The education ministry in 2010 decided in principle to introduce the

system under which the students would take one test for a place in any of the science and technology universities and another test for a place in any of the engineering universities.

It means admission seekers will be enrolled at those universities based on the merit list prepared from one single test, relieving them of the hassle of taking separate exams for different institutions.

"We have been advocating for this system. The president also talked about the issue several times and the education ministry twice took initiatives to this end. But nothing happened," said UGC Chairman Mannan.

The commission recommended that all the universities in the country introduce two mandatory courses on Bangla Language and Culture and History of Birth of Independent Bangladesh, said the officials.

It also suggested that the senior teachers of different universities take classes on contractual or part-time basis at the newly established universities, which lack such senior teachers.

It further proposed making a database of retired teachers who will take classes at the universities that have a shortage of teachers. A policy will have to be formulated in this regard, said the officials of UGC.

The commission laid emphasis on engaging students in extra-curricular activities so that they cannot get sidetracked and get involved in militancy or criminal activities.

It suggested transmitting lectures of noted teachers and educationists through the use of different multimedia in the universities.