

Students protest GP 30-yr publicity deal with DU

Student organisations of Dhaka University Saturday protested a 30-year agreement that allows the country's largest mobile phone operator Grameenphone to use the TSC premises for brand publicity, reports bdnews24.com.

The Progressive Students Alliance (PSA) took out a procession on the campus, demanding immediate cancellation of the agreement DU signed with GP on June 16. Bangladesh Students' Union (BSU), and Bangladesh Chhatra Maitree also brought out separate processions.

Under the agreement, the TSC complex that houses a cafeteria, auditorium, reading room, art and music rooms, stage, swimming pool, store and a bank will be used by GP for its publicity.

BSU general secretary Manabendra Dev said students would not accept the company's move to "do business using an educational institution".

The PSA asked the university authorities to scrap the agreement by June 30 or face a tough movement.

According to the agreement, GP will set up a sculpture named Peace Bird at TSC, beautify the premises, renovate the TSC cafeteria and sponsor the university's six annual events. The mobile operator will spend Tk 30 lakh on the sculpture project.

GP will pay Tk 30 lakh for the cafeteria renovation project. In return, it will use the walls, pillars, and other areas of the cafeteria for publicity.

GP will sponsor six events of TSC with a payment of Tk 10 lakh a year and will be allowed to promote its products and services during the events through kiosks, brand promoters and presentations.

Under the agreement, GP is entitled to set up a permanent or temporary shop or other establishment with signboards along with its logo on the unused space of the eastern side of the premises.

GP will establish a courier station and a

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Students protest

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point) at TSC in return for Tk 35,000 in monthly rent.

As per the agreement, other advertisers will be banned from TSC premises. GP will enjoy preference for any future sponsorship proposal from TSC.

Contacted by bdnews24.com, TSC director Alamgir Hossain said GP was not entrusted with special powers in the agreement.

"No company came to develop the TSC before. The agreement was signed with GP as it showed interest," Alamgir said.

Alamgir said the authorities would not do "anything opposed by students".

"There is scope to scrap the agreement anytime if anything in it goes against the university's interest."

DU pro-vice chancellor Prof AFM Yusuf Haider refused to comment.

But DU treasurer Syed Abul Kalam Azad said the agreement could be cancelled anytime, if necessary.

Asked about the term of the agreement, the treasurer said the syndicate was not informed about the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Professor AHM Mostafizur Rahman, adviser of the TSC, told bdnews24.com that the decision of signing the agreement had been taken for the sake of students.

"Their opinions will be taken into account."

Prof Rahman said the vice-chancellor started talks with student bodies and others over the issue.

Some student organisations, including Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dai and PSA, submitted memoranda to the DU proctor.