

Probe finds DU teacher's 'militant link'

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An internal probe by Dhaka University has found the involvement of one of its teachers in "Islamist militancy".

Prof KM Saiful Islam Khan of Persian language and literature department has long been involved with radical Islamist group Bangladesh Jamiat-E-Talaba-E-Arabia, says the probe report.

"I believe many more things will come out if a thorough investigation is carried out," said acting DU proctor Prof AM Amzad who conducted the probe.

Amzad submitted the report to DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique recently.

The DU authorities launched the probe after detectives arrested Shakhawat and Omar Faruque -- both ex-presidents of Talaba, student body of Islami Oikya Andolan -- from Saiful's office room in June for their alleged links with "militant activities".

Saiful, who was chief secretary of the Talaba central committee in 1989-90, has been involved with Islami Oikya Andolan founded by alleged war criminal and first Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Moulana Abdur Rahim, said the probe report.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the report.

Faruque and other former Talaba leaders used to hold meetings with Saiful after he became DU proctor in 2009, and used his office room at the DU Arts Faculty Building for their organisational purposes.

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Saiful, who was DU proctor from 2009 to 2013, also worked as pro-vice chancellor at a private university in the capital. He was removed from the post after allegations of his involvement in militant activities surfaced.

Talking to The Daily Star, Arefin Siddique said they already asked the law enforcement agencies to carry out a thorough probe into Saiful's alleged involvement in militant activities. "We are waiting for their response."

Contacted, an official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said they were looking into the matter.

Monirul Islam, joint commissioner of the Detective Branch of the DMP, told this correspondent, "Though the organisation [Talaba] is not banned, we monitor its activities like those of some other Islamist organisations."

The report mentions, "He [Saiful] did not sever relations with radical organisations even after he became a teacher at Dhaka University. He secretly

continued his militant activities. He took part in open and secret meetings, and gave lectures and training to Talaba activists at training camps."

It recommended that the university authorities take administrative action against him for allowing Faruque to use his room, and initiate a thorough investigation into the matter. It also suggested cancellation of Saiful's fire-arm licence that he had obtained when he was DU proctor.

Contacted, Saiful refuted the allegations against him, and claimed a vested quarter was conspiring against him.

He, however, admitted that he had been involved with Talaba in his student life.

He also claimed that Talaba is "a non-political organisation and has no connection with militancy."

The DU probe, however, says the charters of both Islami Oikya Andolan and Talaba state that their main objective is to destroy the current political system and establish Islamic rule in the country through "Jihad".