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Policy on cards for foreign university branches

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Grants Commission (UGC) is considering formulation of a policy under the Private University Act for easy identification of the legal and illegal branches of foreign universities.

UGC, the apex regulatory body overseeing private and public universities, yesterday met with the representatives of some 17 foreign university campuses and provided them a questionnaire for collecting information about their academic

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"Previously we declared 56 foreign university campuses illegal as they have no permission from the UGC or education ministry. We invited all of the 56 institutes but the representatives of only 13 of them and four other foreign university campuses were present at the meeting. We took the initiative to formulate a policy or guideline for foreign university campuses under Private University Act," UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said yesterday.

He said some of the foreign university campuses are conducting academic activities taking permission from commerce ministry or Dhaka City Corporation, which is unethical as approval from the UGC, or education ministry is needed for running a higher educational institution.

"We provided a questionnaire paper and asked them to fill up and submit it by one week. Probably four or five foreign university campuses have the quality for getting approval but most others do not have the requirements for providing higher education. We will again publish the list of illegal foreign university campuses, if needed," he told newsmen after the meeting.

He however said the UGC has taken some initiative for removing confusion from the minds of students and guardians about the foreign university campuses.

UGC published a list of 56 foreign university campuses through advertisements in different daily newspapers in the second week of May, where the commission said the listed institutes are operating without valid documents of the government's permission or approval.

It declared 56 foreign university campuses illegal following allegations of selling different degrees without imparting any quality education.

Meanwhile, around 20 to 25 thousand students of those institutions, who pay around Tk 75 crore annually in tuition fees, are now feeling uncertain about their academic future following the UGC declaration.

In absence of specific rules, the caretaker government is not taking any stern action against those institutions either.