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## Ban on unauthorised campuses

*Proper monitoring and evaluation are a necessity*

**A** NUMBER of unauthorised branches or outer campuses of some private universities will soon be closed down. The move clearly points to some of the things that have been going wrong with private universities in Bangladesh, especially where proper affiliation and maintenance of standards are concerned. We at this newspaper welcome the move and hope that the measure will act as a deterrent to the mushrooming of under-quality private universities that has gone on for a very long time.

While we appreciate any action against unauthorised private universities or their branches and outer campuses, we feel it is necessary to point out here that some private universities have in the past many years fulfilled an important national need. Such universities are certainly few in number, but through their quality and academic excellence they have filled a rather big void in higher education. Where the public universities have been hamstrung by a lack of space and have therefore been unable to take in as many students as one would have liked them to, these private universities have shown that they can share the load and at the same time uphold the standards one expects universities to maintain as they impart teaching to the young. It is our view that the authorities, notably the University Grants Commission, will encourage the growth of similar academic enterprises in future.

We recall that in the recent past a number of under-performing universities were identified and proscribed because of their failure to follow regulations. The authorities at the time placed great emphasis on a uniformity of standards for private universities. It now becomes important for the nation to be informed to what extent such uniformity has been applied to the existing universities. This is essential since a profit mentality has seemed to get the better of much of private university education, obviously to the detriment of the young. Vested political and commercial interests have by and large undermined the quality of private university education. Private university education has gone haywire owing to an absence of the necessary monitoring and evaluation of university performance. It is against such a background that the University Grants Commission needs to be strengthened, through a foolproof mechanism of supervision being put in place. The time is here and now for decisive action toward a streamlining of the nation's private universities.