

Editorial

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Truant teachers

This shouldn't be allowed any further

OUR concern and disappointment become profound when we hear of teachers in an educational institute doing everything else but teaching. And something of that deplorable nature has been going on for years together at the National University (NU).

We are appalled to learn from a report that as many as 86 lecturers of the institute never performed their assigned duties of taking classes in NU affiliated colleges, though they drew their salaries on a regular basis. It was further revealed in a report that when 38 teachers were directed by the NU Vice Chancellor through a letter on June 26 to take classes in some specified colleges they refused to comply. Furthermore, these teachers forced the VC to withdraw the notice within two days following strong resistance from the teachers' pool on the alleged ground that the words used in the notice were incorrect and indecent.

The teachers' pool was introduced in 1992 with the objective of sending teachers to NU affiliated colleges to take classes. From the initial four teachers the number has grown to 86 over the years, with 50 recruited during 2003-04 period allegedly on political consideration. And there is widespread allegation that though most of the teachers do not report to the authorities in the university on every office day, they sign attendance registers once a week for all the days.

What transpires from the detailed report is that the National University lacks proper administration to effect faculty discipline and commitment that an institute of its stature deserves. Therefore, it is only natural that questions regarding teacher appointment procedure, monitoring mechanism to ensure attendance and quality teaching and taking corrective measures when required would come to our minds. It is unacceptable that such a large number of teachers have been playing truant for such a long time and that the university authorities had failed to take actions against them. This also remains unclear who would answer for the students who had been denied teaching lessons for so many years.

We understand that between allegations and counter allegations what has suffered most is education itself. This must not be allowed to go on any further. We strongly suggest the relevant ministry to give a deep look into the affairs at the institute in question. This should be treated as an eye-opener since there may be more such truant teachers in other academic institutes in the country.