

JAGANNATH UNIVERSITY

Many students, no qualified teachers

KAUSAR ISLAM

... Jagannath College that was declared a fully-fledged university in 1995 has yet to put right many of the existing problems.

It started functioning with the appointment of first Vice Chancellor (VC), Dr Sirajul Islam Khan, to the Jagannath University (JU) on February 8, this year.

The university has completed the admission process for the first year honours course, but it does not have syndicate, senate or even the academic council.

"We have already appointed deans, a treasurer and a controller in acting positions, but will soon make these appointments permanent," said the VC.

He said that the academic council could not be formed, as there was a high court injunction on the matter.

"Some members of the teaching staff who do not meet standards set by the University for teachers, have filed a case in high court challenging the set standards. We complete these requirements once the legal battle is over," said the VC.

This issue has left the university authorities in a dilemma, as the minimum requirement for a teacher is an M. Phil or PhD. But most teachers do not have the required qualification.

University authorities did not disclose how many of the 307 teachers do not reach the standards.

The ministry has already transferred a number of such teachers while the rest are continuing at the university.

"According to the JU Act 2005, teachers who would not be absorbed as University faculty

members could continue with their jobs for five years from the commencement of the University," Dr Khan.

The university consists of 36 departments and requires a large number of teachers, and authorities say that there will be no reduction in the number of teaching staff. However teachers with the required qualifications would be recruited soon, said the VC.

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The JU Act 2005 clearly states that all existing students of the university will fall under the jurisdiction of the new university once it is active.

Authorities cannot make any decisions because of the lack of a syndicate, senate and academic council. Yet, the students keep pressing their demands everyday. "We have clearly told them that

from now on registrations as well as other activities will come under the Jagannath University, but would take little time to complete the process," said the VC.

This year Ka unit has admitted 1,375 students, while the Kha unit and Ga units have admitted 2,675 and 1,400 students respectively. The total number of students in the university now stands at 42,450 including the existing 37,000.

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

... Parents of more than 500 children below ten years lined up in long queues with their children inside the premises of in Tejgaon Government High School to take measles vaccination.

Despite the blistering weather, the enthusiasm among the parents and students alike could not be ignored. And moreover, parents whose children are not students of the school but who reside in the same areas also gathered at the venue for immunisation on March 1.

One of the parents, Zahirul Alam said: "I found out that measles is the fifth leading cause of death among children under five years of age in Bangladesh".

"That's why I wanted to make sure my child was safe", he added.

"More than 550 students were vaccinated in the school for measles on March 1", said Rezina Akhter, the headmistress.

Known as the Measles Catch Up Campaign, it is being conducted by the government with the support of world Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), American Red Cross, United Nations Fund, CDC and the Government of Japan.

Sources from Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), a government organization under health ministry said 33.5 million children, aged between 9 months and ten years will be vaccinated against measles in around three weeks in the country, which started from February 25 and will continue till March 16.

Dr Khan said.

This is the largest public health mobilization effort in the history of Bangladesh and involves approximately 50,000 skilled vaccinators and 750,000 volunteers covering 62 districts and 441 upazillas and 5 city corporations

The campaign was divided into two phases. Vaccination was given to children in almost 2314 schools and madrassahs in the city till March 2.

And the vaccination campaign will continue only at all the designated immunization centers in the city from March 4 till 16.

Approximately 20,000 children die from measles every year in Bangladesh said a Unicef press release.

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the history of Bangladesh and involves approximately 50,000 skilled vaccinators and 750,000 volunteers covering 62 districts and 441 upazillas and 5 city corporations", said Dr Iqbal Ansary Khan, medical officer of EPI and Surveillance and measles focal person.

Doctors said measles is one of the most contagious diseases. It is spread easily from one person to another through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes and a vulnerable person inhales the organism.

The virus grows in the cells that line the back of the throat and lungs. It remains the leading cause of death among young children, who are the most at risk.

Symptoms include fever, running nose, cough, and sore eyes, followed by a blotchy rash usually starting on the face and spreading down the body.

Children with measles are inclined to having pneumonia. The best protection against measles is immunization. In addition, vitamin A supplements have been found to reduce the severity of the

disease.

According to Unicef, this campaign is estimated to cost 15 million US dollars contributed by American Red Cross, consists of 40 million vaccines and syringes, 70,000 ice packs, four million reconstitution syringes, 40 million AD syringes, 200,000 safety boxes and more. Bangladesh government is contributing 25 percent of the operational cost of the campaign.

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