

Open despite UGC order to close

TAWFIQUE ALI

The private universities recommended for closure are still running in the capital without any tangible academic activities, according to the University Grants Commission (UGC).

A UGC inspection team has visited the universities recently to have a latest picture of what is happening at those universities. Three out of six universities recommended for closure have virtually no academic activities, said UGC Chairman Dr M Asaduzzaman.

A nine-member evaluation committee headed by the chairman of the University Grants Commission submitted its report to the prime minister on October 17, 2004 recommending closure of eight private universities for violating rules and regulations.

Four of those universities were operating in Dhaka. These are Central Women's University, Queens University, America-Bangladesh University, and Green University of Bangladesh.

The other four are Comilla University, Pundra University of Science and Technology Bogra, BGC Trust University Chittagong and Southern University Chittagong.

They were found lacking in



adequate full-time teachers and infrastructure, appropriate curriculum, examination system, grading system, library and laboratory facilities. A one-member judicial probe

committee headed by retired justice M Fazlul Huq formed on November 2, 2004 however dropped the two universities of Chittagong from the closure list.

The UGC team went to inspect Green University at Farmgate last February. The team found only five students and two part time teachers at the university. Most of the rooms including library and computer laboratory were under lock and key, said the inspection report.

Two students of law were found attending class while one of BBA and two of CSE were found roaming around, says the inspection report.

"Green University has no competence or physical state to conduct higher education. No academic programme is in fact being run at this university," it says.

The team inspected the Queens University at a three-story building on Kemal Ataturk Avenue in Banani on February 28. "The team found no students, teachers and no officials except one gate man at the university," the report said.

During inspection of Central Women's University on Abhoy Das Lane in Old Dhaka on March 1, the UGC team found six students but no teachers or officials. All eight students of three disciplines sit in one room at a time for class, the report said quoting the students.

Comilla University and Pundra University of Science and Technology in Bogra are too in a similar condition, said the UGC chairman.

According to a UGC source, a powerful political and trade lobby has been active to keep the errant universities still running.

"Nothing will happen to these universities, as the lobby has managed a powerful section at the Prime Minister's Office to foil any administrative actions against them," said a UGC source last October.

A ray of hope

FROM PAGE 17 those affected have impairment in social interaction, social communication and imagination. This is referred to as triad of impairment.

In addition to this triad, repetitive behavioural patterns are a notable feature as is a resistance to change in routine.

One in 10 autistic persons shows exceptional skills in areas such as art, music, calculation or memory. Appropriate social behaviour does not come naturally to children with autism. They cannot interpret facial expressions or emotions. They do not know how to share or make friends. Individuals with autism may also experience sensitivities in the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. (Source: AWF)

Aquib, 7, is an autistic child. "When he was three, we took him to an ENT (Ear, Nose & Throat) specialist, who found nothing wrong with the related organs," said his mother Sharmin Islam.

"Later through hospital sources I came to know about Dr Rownak Hafiz who treat autistic children through therapy and parent counselling," she said. "In April 2004 when AWF established I admitted my son to the school and in two years my son has improved a lot," she added.

"Though he can not produce words he can communicate with me. He just repeats words I tell him. Doctors assured that learning will take some time," she further said.

The exact cause or causes of autism is/are still not known. Autism is a brain disorder that

affects the way the brain uses information. But research shows that genetic factors are important and the disability may be associated with a variety of causes affecting brain development before, during or very soon after birth.

Autism is not caused by emotional problems or deprivation. It is a brain based developmental disorder and is not a result of poor parenting; family income, life style and educational levels.

Studies show that people who have autism can improve with proper education. Early diagnosis and intensive behavioural intervention can have a significant and lasting positive impact on autistic children and they can benefit from a good educational programme.

Through trained teachers, using specially structured programmes that emphasise individual instructions, persons with autism can learn to function at home and in the community.

The number of autistic children is increasing the world over. In Bangladesh, its number would be staggering. On an average, autism is now thought to affect one person in 500, said Dr Hafiz.

"As there are limited seats in the school I can not accommodate autistic children from other parts of the city as well as out of the city," she added.

"One of my future plans is to establish our own complex and to establish more Training and Education Centres in Bangladesh for the convenience of autistic children," she further added.

Drug abuse

FROM PAGE 127 to seven cases a month against the drug peddlers."

"About 200 cases are pending with this police station for the last one year," he added.

When asked how the addicts are continuing their business despite the huge number they file, Shahnur said that they take action against the addicts every day.

"The Rab, Detective Branch (DB), Cobra and Department of Narcotics Control have taken action and arrested many addicts from the place," he added.

Sources said that the drug peddlers pay a huge amount of money to a section of the law enforcement agency to turn a blind eye to their businesses.

But the OC denied the allegation. "They never have any money and even if they do they spend it on drugs," he said.

Quench thirst

FROM PAGE 17 of these acts," said Golam Sarwar, public health analyst, DCC.

He said 107 food items are on the list for inspection. An inspector can collect samples of these food items only and send those to the DCC laboratory for testing.

"As foods and drinks selling on the streets are not on the list under any DCC law, we cannot test any such food item or drinks," Sarwar said.

But experts say this is a lame excuse to avoid their duty.

When contacted, first class magistrate Rokon-ud-doullah, who heads one of the mobile courts involved in the drive against adulterated food items, said: "The article 124 of DCC Ordinance 1983 empowers the authority to take action against selling of any kind of unhygienic food."

Drive against illegal gas connections

Faizul Khan Tanim

Titas gas transmission and distribution company authorities do not have a clue about the number of illegal gas connections that exists in houses in Dhaka.

Aiming at detecting and disconnecting all illegal lines, Titas decided to conduct drives on all residences in the city by April 20, but the deadline has been extended till May 15.

An announcement stated that domestic consumers would be given an opportunity to regularise illegal lines and pay for the burners used, without any extra charges or penalties.

A total of 28,000 such irregularities have been straightened from the time of the announcement in March till now.

A number of vigilance teams from Titas have been simultaneously conducting the drive in the city.

Titas authorities said that last year during a similar drive they found many houses using the four-burner stove plus oven but paid for only the conventional a two-burner stove.

Selima Akhter, a housewife from Gulshan said that the announcement has not been well advertised.

"I know a lot of residents who were spared because they bribed the Titas employees and those conducting the drive, and ended up paying for two burners instead of the four-burners they were using," Selima said.

Another resident Abdur Rahim was quite unhappy about

disconnecting illegal gas lines without Titas ensuring a proper supply of gas for day-to-day use.

He said that three weeks back they did not have a sufficient supply of gas for cooking.

Under the drive, illegal gas connections used for commercial purposes would be instantly disconnected and the fraudulent gas connection holders will be brought to justice, Titas sources said, adding that the special drive would help reduce gas pilferage that has been causing huge losses to the country for a long period of time.

Between the end of last year and beginning of 2006, Titas conducted drives against illegal connections and meters in the industrial areas surrounding the city and disconnected 250 connections.

The company was able to raise around Tk nine crore in penalties from these industries in Dhaka and from the surrounding areas like Savar, Tongi, Gazipur, Nayaranganj, and Fatullah.

The government has been incurring losses between Tk 200 to 250 crores, every year due to pilferage, popularly termed as 'system loss'.

Titas authorities admitted that a section of unscrupulous officials and employees are responsible for such pilferage and illegal connections as many of the approximately existing eleven lac consumers within the company's distributing area are bribing these employees to use these illegal lines.

11x3

8x3

10x2