

Call to outlaw party

FROM PAGE 1
with the political parties hampers the educational environment as well as relation among the teachers and students, he said.

"Without academic freedom of the teachers and autonomy in the educational institutions, culture of knowledge is impossible," Prof Miah said.

However teachers are not above accountability, the former DU VC said.

"Some vice-chancellors considering the autonomy of the universities as their personal autonomy misuse the power," he said.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmed of Dhaka University said the University Order clearly states that elected student bodies are allowed to do political activities in the university.

"It is possible to remove crime and clashes from the campus by following the prevailing University Order", he said.

About the students' and teachers' politics, he said, "Any conscious person who has political wisdom must work and do research on politics."

"This culture is followed everywhere in the world," he said.

"Disciplinary committee would look into if any teacher does any immoral deeds," he said.

"Teachers' and students' involvement in party politics is an obstacle to higher education in universities," said Prof M Asaduzzaman, chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

"Dhaka University Order, 1973 has to be modified and developed to ensure the teachers' accountability," he said.

"We don't want to interfere in the activities of the universities. We want to bring development in the academic environment of the

universities," said the UGC chairman.

He urged the caretaker government to strengthen the UGC.

In appointing teachers and vice-chancellors at the universities, political influence plays a major role but it should not continue, he said.

Referring to the UGC's 20-year plan, he said, "A Search Committee would be formed and VCs would be appointed as per their recommendation."

"Universities cannot sustain without ensuring academic freedom of the teachers," Anu Muhammad of Jahangirnagar University said at the discussion.

"Autonomy of the universities should not be curtailed or interfered with," he said.

He expressed his opinion against strengthening of the UGC.

"Every political government has used the universities as employment generators for their party adherents," Anu Muhammad said.

He urged appointing university teachers without being influenced by political considerations.

Dr Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University said the existing University Order is enough to bring back the glory of the universities.

Sahabul Haq, lecturer of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, presented the keynote paper at the discussion.

Dr SI Khan, VC of Jagannath University, Dr Ali Murtaza, former VC of BUET, Rashid E Mahbub, former VC of BSMMU, DR M Shamsur Rahman, VC of Kabi Nazrul University, Professor Syed Rashidul Hasan, pro-VC of National University, Dr Shakhawat Ansari and Sheikh Hafizur Rahman Karzon among others took part at the open discussion.

Banned Islamist

FROM PAGE 1
primary interrogation, the arrestees have admitted to having gone through a month's physical training at Jibontoli, a faraway village in Bhaluka of Mymensingh.

The elite crime busters have also seized three firearms and ammunition, explosives and bomb-making materials from Mymensingh and Barisal.

Derived from Arabic, 'Hijbe Abu Omar' means the party of Omar's father. Omar is the only son of Abdur Rouf.

Tanjime Tamiruddin was renamed Hijbe Abu Omar after Rouf was captured along with his wife and some other militants during a raid at Jibontoli Madrasa on August 2 last year.

During the raid, the law enforcers also recovered some bomb-making materials and training equipment from the militants' den that also had four bunkers and two sentry outposts.

Intelligence sources said the major breakthrough came after the law enforcers had arrested Abu Omar leader Nawab Mukut in Dinajpur last month, suspecting him of being a member of banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

During interrogation at the Joint Interrogation Cell, Mukut had disclosed some vital information about their organisation.

Following up the leads, the Rab busted different places in Dhaka and arrested a number of the group members including the seven.

The Hijbe Abu Omar members used to stage fake kidnaps involving fellow operatives and extort hefty ransoms from their families in order to fund the organisation. Besides, they collect money from pious Muslims, and Zakat al-Fitrat (religious alms tax).

The organisation has a vast network of operatives spread across Dhaka, Mymensingh, Sherpur, Barisal, Patuakhali, Madaripur, Faridpur, Gopalganj, Chittagong, Sylhet, Dinajpur and Panchagarh. The law enforcers have already conducted several drives in Dhaka, Dinajpur, Mymensingh and Barisal to track down the Hijbe Omar activists.

Moulana Rouf graduated from DarulUloom Deobond Madrasa in India in 1989. Earlier, he had studied in a madrasa at Gaohordanga in Faridpur. He went to Afghanistan to join the war against the former Soviet forces and returned home before the war ended.

A section of the Huji leaders founded Islami Dawati Kafela Bangladesh (IDKB) with Hafez Yahya as its amir in the late 1990s. But soon a rift surfaced between some top leaders of Dawati Kafela and Abdur Rouf. As Rouf continued to defy its amir, he was expelled from the organisation in March 1999.

Following his expulsion, Rouf visited Kawmi madrasas across the country to share his views for an armed revolution. Soon Tanjime Tamiruddin was floated with a good number of students and teachers joining the ranks. The outfit was headquartered in Mymensingh.

From jail, Rouf ordered his disciples to start afresh the militant activities under Hijbe Abu Omar sometime last year, the sources added.

A teacher of Jibontoli Jamia Islamia Nurul Ulum Kawmi Madrasa, Rouf, 42, had been arrested several times before in Faridpur and Cox's Bazar between 1993 and 1995. He was arrested again on September 19, 2003 at a BNP leader's house at Boalmari in Faridpur. Eighteen others including the madrasa principal Shahidul Islam were among the arrestees.

After his arrest in Faridpur, he told reporters that he had received training in guerrilla warfare in Pakistan in 1989 and with the Mujahideens fought shoulder to shoulder against the Soviet forces for four years. He had also been trained in operating AK-47 assault rifle and other modern weapons.

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