

Preventive measures and safeguards against extremism in the university



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For the first time in Bangladesh, a two-day workshop was organised by British High Commission in Bangladesh in partnership with the University Grants Commission (UGC) focusing on the topic "Tackling Extremism on Campus: the UK & Bangladesh experience".

The British High Commissioner and the Chairman of UGC delivered their welcome messages which highlighted on the alarming global events related to the topic of the workshop. It was emphasised that this workshop is meant to raise awareness of the participants coming from the academia and the government so that each sector can play its role efficiently.

The workshop was divided in different sessions with a specific topic per session like "Understanding the Problem", "Responding to the Challenge", "The Issue of Extremism", "Implementing Change", "Lessons Learned" and "Next Steps". An introduction to the UK experience from international counter extremism group was discussed by speakers from the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This was supplemented by speakers from BRAC University and University of Dhaka. The keywords on this discussion were - Protect, Prepare, Pursue, and Prevent.

The experience of Middlesex University London on its approach to safeguarding students in UK was presented. The HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) is one organisation which provides funds to UK universities in implementing the strategies of monitoring and evaluating how higher education institutions keep people safe. The fund is used to stimulate innovative activity in the interest of students, transitioning to increasingly student-focused, market led and outcome based approach to regulation.

The Center for Peace and Justice of BRAC University, through its Executive Director, expounded on the economic and social gains, emerging fragility, youth involvement, and the modern life and alienation as viewed on the national perspective. He cited the socio-political factors affecting the issue of extremism are shrinking of space, escalation of violence, law and order situation and global politics.

In light of the aforementioned situations pertaining to UK, Bangladesh, and other parts of the globe, a participant of the workshop said, "I can mention herein the number of preventive measures and safeguards instituted by AIUB to pre-empt any untoward incident related to extremism, terrorism and militancy in the campus. It is important that the management provides all out support to the cause of ensuring the safety and security of the students, faculty, non-academic staff and personnel. New students are provided a handbook which outlines the dos and don'ts a student should observe. A student with the guardian has to sign agreement to



abide with the rules and regulations of the university. A new faculty has to sign the contract which delineates not only the responsibility of teaching but other professional acts. An orientation programme for two days is organised to provide them with overview of the policies, guidelines, the

dom and convenience to interact with one another and to their teachers. The continuous vigilance of all concerned will prevent any occurrence of any untoward incident in the campus."

These and many more interventions are deemed important to safeguard the stu-



pedagogy of teaching and other expected duties and responsibilities. Security mechanism is in place including identity checks before entering the campus of the university with CCTVs installed in strategic places. Students with problems both in academic or personal has the chance to talk to the teachers for consultation and guidance. Keeping the students busy and engaged in extracurricular activities like cultural events and sports keep them away from any harm or ill thoughts. Instead they will acquire a sound mind and body. Parents' access to the VUES allow them to monitor the progress of their children studies in the university. Providing a conducive learning environment is an important factor where students have the free-

dom and convenience to interact with one another and to their teachers. The continuous vigilance of all concerned will prevent any occurrence of any untoward incident in the campus. It was a privilege for AIUB to have been selected to be a part of this undertaking with the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Carmen Z. Lamagna; Farheen Hassan, Director, BBA Programme; and Shama Islam, Special Assistant, OSA attending the workshop.

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