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When asked how they had not spotted the long queue of people outside the station and those carrying away packets of what surely looked like burgers, Baton said he had no comment to make right then as the

issue was under investigation.

Meanwhile, the Homies Ministry formed a 1,000 member taskforce to investigate how all this happened under the nose of the incompetent but very morally-upstanding police force. All taskforce members will be paid a retainer and will

have to submit a probe report which will never see the light of day.

"The Thwot has asked us to stop these immoral practices. We are trying to stop ourselves too. For instance, we were told not to gamble with money when we can easily gamble with people's lives," a member of the taskforce said in the condition of anonymity or because this reporter forgot his name or made this quote up.

With the latest arrests, at least 568 people have been put behind bars for trading in burgers. Some 44 burglars have died from police gun going off by mistake, also known as an Official Oopsie.

Fortunately all 44 had at least six yaba tablets on them which, of course, made the otherwise extrajudicial killings absolutely legit i.e. protest it on day one or accept it forever.

In other developments, the government also declared that gambling can only take place in the stock market and all criminal activities must be contained within the ruling party structure. The Robin Hood Act was also passed in the latest parliament session, which allows for impunity for crimes, provided the accused does some token social welfare work that the government should ideally do, in order to free the state to focus on more important issues such as how to demonise the Rohingyas.

All characters are fictional. Because it is a satire, which is not on the nose but elbows. Uh?

Osama Rahman is a whistleblower and a lawn mower, and he always writes in the third person even though he doesn't really know what that means.

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The mobile phone connections of three top JU Chhatra League leaders including Saddam Hossain were cut off after a phone conversation among them was leaked on social media. The leaders were heard talking about the deal and the VC's role in it. Six teachers of the university, who were participating in anti-corruption protests, also claimed their mobile phone connections were disrupted. We know very well that only people of 'authority' have the ability, no matter legal or illegal, to ask mobile phone companies to cut off someone's connection.

Jahangirnagar University is not the only institution in the country that is currently experiencing a bad episode due to its VC. Two days back, a simple Google search to see what newspaper reports on public universities—the words 'VC' in the Bangla alphabet and its translation 'upacharya'—led to hundreds of perturbing stories, including that of serious corruption allegations against the VCs of at least eight top universities.

I can't help but mention one—Professor Khondoker Nasiruddin, Vice Chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU). Several thousand students have been demonstrating for weeks for Nasiruddin's removal, bringing allegations against him of sexual harassment, nepotism in recruiting teachers and other employees, and corruption in development

projects, including the construction of the Shaheed Minar and Bangabandhu's mural on the campus.

He remains at his post and even expelled (later retracting his decision) a female student named Fatema Tuz Zinia, also the university correspondent of a national daily, for her attempt to investigate his corruptions. In a leaked audio conversation, Nasiruddin was heard using disparaging and threatening language with his students.

Allegations of corruptions and abuse of power against Barisal University's VC triggered a student movement that has been waged for months. Such vices were also reported against the Vice Chancellors of Begum Rokeya University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Cumilla University, and others.

Why is such corruption and misconduct rampant amongst our VCs? What fuels the highest-ranking officials—and teachers too—of these establishments to conduct themselves so inappropriately? Where does the problem really lie?

To many, partisan political considerations and priorities during appointment in public universities is to blame for the bleak scenario across the country. VCs (and other top officials) care more about the interest of ruling party cadres than that of students, and by extension, the nation.

Years back, the National Strategic Plan for Higher Education of Bangladesh recommended a number of policy reforms and interventions to be implemented to enhance the quality of higher education.



JU Treasurer Professor Sheikh Md Manzurul Huq along with a proctorial body holding a discussion with the demonstrators at the site of the protest on Wednesday, September 4, 2019.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

The first two recommendations were: (i) depoliticisation of public universities; (ii) setting up a national search committee for selecting Vice Chancellors and other senior officials.

If it can be ensured that the main quality of being appointed as a Vice Chancellor (and other officials) is not one's partisan political identity, vicious practices in universities is bound to decline.

The national strategic plan for higher education shows that we actually know where the problem lies and its remedies as well, but we do not care enough to

take these seriously. Due to this indifference, the standard of higher education is decreasing at an alarming rate, brain drain is as acute as ever, and there is a plethora of underqualified graduates struggling to make do in the job market. Bangladeshi public universities are failing to appear in global ranking charts. To avoid further damage, our higher educational institutes should be out of this vicious circle of narrow partisan politics.

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