

Why not a PhD from a leading private university?

Harisur Rahman
is an associate professor at the Department of Political Science and Sociology in North South University, and
Sakir Mohammad
is a Research Associate at the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) in North South University.

**HARISUR RAHMAN and
SAKIR MOHAMMAD**

Bangladesh is probably the only country in the world where a university is evaluated based on its public and private status rather than its teaching and research output or international outlook. Public universities are more privileged and empowered than the private ones in Bangladesh. Many public universities, as such, qualify to grant PhDs, but none of the private universities are able to offer them.

For example, despite being recognised as the top university in Bangladesh in the recent The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2023, North South University (NSU) cannot provide PhD degrees since it is a private institution. Statistically speaking, among all the universities in Bangladesh, NSU has the highest proportion of PhD holders, where every faculty has at least one foreign degree from an internationally acclaimed university. It also has the most per capita research output among all the universities.

Another example is BRAC University, whose students won the World Debating Championship and NASA Space Apps Challenge, competing with universities like Harvard, Yale and Columbia. BRAC University also ranked in the global top 50 for SDG 1 in the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings 2022.

Top private universities such as NSU and BRAC hire international scholars who add value to academic, research and administrative activities, and contribute to adding to global rankings. Apparently, these universities have the physical and intellectual infrastructure and resources to grant PhDs. And for financial and personal reasons, many students might be unable or disinterested in going abroad or opting for a public university to earn their PhD,

and might want to complete them at top universities in Bangladesh instead.

Such issues are worse for female students. Their family, socioeconomic and cultural constraints might bar them from studying abroad, especially since a PhD is a long-term commitment. If PhD degree-granting status were given to reputed private universities, besides Bangladeshi students, international

Top private universities such as NSU and BRAC hire international scholars who add value to academic, research and administrative activities, and contribute to adding to global rankings. Apparently, these universities have the physical and intellectual infrastructure and resources to grant PhDs. And for financial and personal reasons, many students might be unable or disinterested in going abroad or opting for a public university to earn their PhD.

students could also arrive for higher studies, providing our universities with a global outlook and better rankings.

Unfortunately, however, there is a gross generalisation that only those who do not get a chance to go to public universities are admitted to private universities. While this is true to some extent, a significant number of students at certain private universities come from English medium backgrounds and choose to opt out of going to public universities. Also, because of the generous financial aid and merit scholarships, many Bangla medium or mainstream meritorious

students, who are capable of getting chances at public universities, join private universities to complete their studies on time. We tend to forget that it is not only the financial affordability that takes a student to private university; it is the choice of many students who cannot pursue their desired subjects in the public university system.

There is a stereotype in Bangladesh when it comes to private and public universities, where the public university is associated with “meritocracy”, “successful career” or “wannabe BCS cadre”, disregarding the volatile academic atmosphere marred with student and teachers’ politics, ragging culture, session jam and factionalism. Instead of creating a parochial binary between the public and private, we need to evaluate a university, private or public, in terms of its quality. Think about Ivy League universities in the US. Harvard, Yale and Princeton, for example, are all private universities; interestingly, there is hardly anyone who criticises the quality of those elite universities.

Leading private universities must invest money to finance their students if they are



PHOTO: ANDRE HUNTER/UNSPLASH

UN must recognise both 1971 and Rohingya genocide



Tarana Halim,
an actress, lawyer and former minister,
is now president of Bangabandhu Sanskritik Jote and a member of Awami League central committee.

TARANA HALIM

Seventy-five years after the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide came into force, one of its glaring failures has been in not recognising the 1971 Bangladesh genocide and the 2017 genocide against the Rohingya in Myanmar.

This not only saddens us in Bangladesh, it is also distressing for many who have followed large scale massacres in various parts of the world in the post-colonial era.

Polish Jewish refugee lawyer Raphael Lemkin coined the word “genocide” in 1943 to describe the destruction of a nation or ethnic group. The word is derived from the Greek “genos” (people, tribe or race) and the Latin “cide” (killing) against the backdrop of the Holocaust, which Winston Churchill called a “crime without a name”. But Churchill’s double-standards remained the enduring feature of the Western endpoint on genocide or large scale engineered deaths.

Churchill, the British “hero” who guided the Allies to victory in World War II and who attacked Hitler and the Nazis over the Jewish Holocaust, has been held responsible for triggering the Bengal famine that led to three million deaths in what was then undivided Bengal, the largest province of British India.

Madhusree Mukerjee, whose book “Churchill’s Secret War” created waves and rattled many a British colonial apologist, has gone on record to equate Hitler’s extermination of 10 million Jews with Churchill presiding over the death of three million Bengalees through a famine orchestrated by policies linked to the British war effort.

On December 9, 1948, the international community formally adopted a definition of genocide within the 1948 Convention –

essentially enshrining the message of “never again” in international law.

However, academics like Rachel Burns of York University has questioned whether the Convention has achieved what it set out to do and focused on three of its key failures. First, the very term “genocide” is applied too slowly and cautiously when atrocities happen; second, the international community fails to act effectively against genocides; and third, too few perpetrators are actually convicted of these crimes.

Burns points to the many genocides that have occurred since the 1948 Convention and its ratification in 1951, and then points to the only three that have been recognised – and led to trials – under the Convention: Rwanda in 1994, the 1995 Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia, and Cambodia under the 1975-79 Pol Pot regime.

Burns refers to the widespread killing and displacement of the Yazidi by IS and of the Rohingya in Myanmar, which are ongoing and recognised by the UN as a whole, but are yet to be officially recognised as genocides by some individual states. Similarly, 13 years after atrocities took place in the Sudanese region of Darfur, criminal investigations continue, but no official charges of genocide have been made under the Convention.

Political scientist Adam Jones

has also named the genocides committed under Saddam Hussein against the Kurds in 1988-91 in Iraq, and the genocide committed by the West Pakistan forces against Bangladeshis in 1971.

As Rachel Burns put it, “And the list of ‘genocides’ that might fall under the UN definition is frighteningly long. The International Criminal Court is investigating several states in which human rights violations and war crimes ‘may’ have occurred.”

As a passionate and patriotic Bangladeshi, I would like to argue that the UN should prioritise recognising the 1971 East Pakistan genocide against Bengalees for three reasons. Firstly, the number of people killed in then East Pakistan by Pakistani forces (the regular army and collaborators) between March and December 1971 far exceeds the numbers of victims of the three genocides recognised by the UN. Nearly three

– and not by militias – which has since been designated by US and NATO as a “useful ally in the war against terror”.

UN recognition of the 1971 East Pakistan genocide is not only important for the global body to regain its credibility and effectiveness, but also to expose a military institution which is seen as of strategic value to the West.

The West has been fooled, somewhat wilfully, into believing that the Pakistan army is useful in fighting terror in Afghanistan. There is enough evidence now to suggest that the Pakistani generals were always running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. They were giving the US and NATO a springboard for anti-Taliban operations, but were also allowing the Taliban to find shelter, training and weapons in Pakistan, without which the Taliban would have never survived, let alone emerge victorious to take over Afghanistan.

The least the West can do – especially the US, which is very vocal about human rights violations in Bangladesh now – is to officially recognise the 1971 East Pakistan genocide. They should stop fooling their own citizens about the role of the Pakistani army in the War against Terror. By recognising the 1971 genocide, they can hold the Pakistan army accountable for denying Bengalees the right to life during the Liberation War.

Recognition of both the 1971 genocide and the 2017 Rohingya genocide will help call out and expose two evil military institutions who threaten democracy and dignity of life in our part of the world. It is high time the West stops chasing phantoms and does its bit to punish mass murderers. Otherwise, their sermons on human rights just ring hollow.

Seventy-five years after the UN Convention, Nobel laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel’s “never again” remains “a prayer, a promise, a vow”, but not a reality. And their frequent recurrence owes much to how many genocides have gone unrecognised and unpunished.



নর্দান ইলেকট্রিসিটি সাপ্লাই কোম্পানি পিএলসি
Northern Electricity Supply Company PLC
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
কম্পানি কার্যালয় (সিআর) এর শাখা, প্রধান কার্যালয়, বিদ্যুৎ ভবন, গেজেট পথ, রাজশাহী-৯০০০
www.nesco.gov.bd

Memo No: 27.29.0000/012.07.015.22-38Date: 08/01/2023

Invitation for e-Tender (Re-Tender) (IFT)

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. The tenderers who are registered in the National e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) are eligible to participate in this Tender. The fees of downloading the e-Tender Documents of following Packages from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's Branches up to the following Date & Time:

Package No.	Tender ID	Package Description	Last Date & Time of Downloading Tender Documents	Tender Closing & Opening Date & Time
NESCO/2021-2022/GR-10	758707	Supply, Installation of CCTV Camera Surveillance System for Head Office, Rajshahi Rest House & Stores of NESCO PLC	23-Jan-2023, 14:00	24-Jan-2023, 14:30

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



(Md. Mizanur Rahman)
Superintending Engineer (Procurement)
NESCO PLC, Rajshahi

GD-34

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Chuadanga
E-mail: eechu@rhd.gov.bd
Phone & Fax: 02-477789139



Memo No. Chu-2023-0052Dated: 08/01/2023 Eng

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of the following works:

Tender ID	Tender No. and description	Tender last selling date and time	Tender closing & opening date and time
770019	e-GP/DEV/Overpass/01/CHURD/2022-2023. Construction of 418.896m Railway Overpass and 330.00 (165.00+165.00)m Ramp including Road widening works at Kushiia (Trimohoni)-Meherpur-Chuadanga-Jhenaidah Road (R-745) under Road Division, Chuadanga.	06-Feb-2023 16:00	07-Feb-2023 12:00

- This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
- To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
- The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any Member of Schedule Banks for e-GP.
- Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



Md. Monzurul Karim
ID No. 602000
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Chuadanga
01730-782778

GD-33