

PVT UNIVERSITIES

Parents in great worry about children's admission

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AS LAW enforcement agencies have disclosed about the extremism link of quite a good number of private university students, the parents of graduation aspirants are worried where to go for admission of their children, provided the country's public universities have limited seats.

Some of those involved in Gulshan and Sholakia extremist attacks in June-July last were found to be students of private universities, mostly of North South University, the country's first private university, according to law enforcement agencies.

Even seven of the eight convicted killers of blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider were NSU students.

More worrying is the fact that law enforcement agencies have also come up with claims about the brainwashing of a good number of students from different private universities.

While talking to UNB, some parents, anxious about the future education of their children, have urged the government to monitor the activities of all the private universities so that the young minds do not fall victim to the brain-

washing of militant operatives.

Nasir Uddin, a resident of Manikganj town whose son Jobayer Hasnat appeared for this year's HSC examination, said, 'My son will first try to have admission to any public university. If he can't, he'll enrol in a degree programme under the National University. But, I won't allow him to get admitted to any private university.'

Another guardian, Mofazzel Ali, also from Manikganj, said his son would try for Jahangirnagar University first, and then for a suitable programme in a college of the district under the National University.

Mizanur Rahman of Meherpur town also expressed his concerns over the admission of his son, Akash, as the involvement of private university students in extremist activities and deadly attacks on innocent civilians keep coming at the back of his mind.

'I've a long-cherished dream of getting my son admitted to a reputed university in Dhaka. But, the situation is not in favour of keeping him in any mess-house for study. Besides, I don't have relatives in the capital where my son can stay,' he said.

Mizanur said he is yet

to decide what to do with his son regarding the admission at the graduation level. 'If my son fails to get enrolled in any public university, I'll, perhaps, be compelled to admit him to a private university for a good career. But, I'll live with worries always.'

Another guardian, Ramzan Ali, of the district said he would have sent his son abroad for higher studies had he had the financial capacity.

He hoped that the law enforcement agencies would increase monitoring in private universities so that teachers, students and employees there cannot get involved in militant activities.

Another guardian, Habibur Rahman, said the government, after the two recent extremist attacks, increased vigilance in private universities and demanded the government continue it with more efforts which will help the guardians of graduation aspirants to regain confidence in private universities.

He also suggested increasing the control of the University Grants Commission over private universities.

Contacted, education minister Nurul Islam Nahid said private universities have to take their own

measures to regain confidence of the guardians.

'But the government wouldn't help the institutions in this regard. Even before the attacks at Gulshan and Sholakia, the ministry had given them some guidelines. But they did not come up. If they had turned alert they would not have faced this image crisis now,' he added.

Sheikh Kabir Hossain, chairman of the Association of Non-Government Universities of Bangladesh, said 'We held several meetings and asked private universities to take various anti-extremism programmes. We've taken steps to monitor students during their stay at the universities. Guardians should also monitor their children.'

He said the association also directed the universities to introduce extra-curricular activities and counselling for both the new and the old students.

The ANUB chairman also mentioned that they have directed the private universities to take cautionary steps while recruiting teachers.

According to the UGC annual report-2014, some 90,936 students were admitted to 75 private universities across the country for the academic year.