

Pvt univs increase vigil on spread of extremism

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PRIVATE universities in the country are taking up different measures to increase vigilance upon students and dissuade them from religious extremism after news of the likely involvement of current and former students came to the fore following the recent terror attacks in the country.

The measures include strengthening monitoring on students, engaging them in more co-curriculum activities, counseling, as well as creating awareness among guardians on keeping their children outside the influence of religious extremism.

Private university vice-chancellors, teachers and students said an uneasy situation was prevailing at the campuses after allegations of terror link against some teachers and students of different private universities emerged following the recent terror attacks in Dhaka and Kishoreganj.

A section of top management officials and academics feared that the allegations of link with religious extremism 'could have a negative impact on overall growth of private universities'.

Association of Non-Government Universities of Bangladesh president Sheikh Kabir Hossain said that the association at a meeting on Wednesday asked all private universities to strengthen monitoring on the activities of students.

All private universities should notify the govern-

ment about their absent students. Universities will hold more co-curricular activities and counseling of students to keep students away from extremist activities, he said.

The government had asked all educational institutions to submit to the authorities lists of students who have been absent for 10 straight days.

The government took the decision as some former and current students of private universities including North South University, BRAC University, Manarat International University, were found involved in the recent terror attacks in Dhaka and Kishoreganj.

Two of the five attackers who were killed in the Gulshan mayhem were students of private universities. One of the attackers of the Kishoreganj killing incident was also a private university student.

Seven of the eight people convicted of the February 2013 murder of blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider were private university students.

Against the backdrop of the recent terror attacks, North South University decided on July 10 to expel those who would remain absent for an entire semester.

BRAC University, vice-chancellor professor Syed Saad Andaleeb said that they had heightened security and scanning of students. 'We will add more CCTV camera to monitor activities'.

We have asked all faculties to spend more time with

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students outside of classes, he added.

United International University VC professor M Rezwan Khan said that they usually maintain strict security and would further follow the government's instruction. 'We will very soon send notices to all the students and guardians to inform us about any kind of absence in class immediately.'

Teachers and officials of University of Asia Pacific University said if a student

remained absent for three consecutive days he or she has to inform authorities.

ASA University Bangladesh and South East University officials said they would take steps to strengthen counselling and motivational activities among students and strengthen teacher-student relations.

A section of VCs, including University of Development Alternative vice-chancellor Emajuddin Ahamed, feared that allegations of links of students of private universities with religious

extremism might have a negative impact on overall growth of private universities and will encourage Bangladeshi students to go abroad to study.

Association of Non-Government Universities of Bangladesh president Sheikh Kabir Hossain and University Grants Commission former chairman Nazrul Islam said that they were not sure about the negative impact of the overall growth of the private universities but there might be a negative impact

on the private universities whose names have come to the fore.

On that point, the BRAC University VC said 'we have to wait and see'.

Home minister Asaduzzaman Khan and education minister Nurul Islam Nahid will hold separate meetings with vice-chancellors and pro-vice-chancellors of private universities on July 17 and with the VCs and pro-VCs of public universities on July 23, as part of a government campaign against extremism.

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