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# Universities are autonomous: PM

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By A Staff Correspondent

Shah Azizur Rahman, Prime Minister and Leader of the House said that a planned education system was the objective of the present government's education policy. The government was making efforts in that direction. He said that the universities of the country were now autonomous.

The Prime Minister was speaking while winding up the discussion on the Dacca University (amendment) Bill on Thursday in the Jatiya Sangsad in the evening. The bill passed by voice of vote after the PM's speech. Shah Aziz further said that 20,000 primary schools have been brought under development scheme. Under this scheme a new curriculum will be introduced which includes vocational course. Under the development plan 700 non-government schools have also been included. 145 government schools and 37 government colleges will be included in the scheme.

He also said that within only nine months 27 lakh people were given functional education in the country under literacy programme. Within next four years the country will be freed from illiteracy. The prime minister who is also in charge of the Ministry of Education said.

He further said that it was a pride of the present government that it has restored some discipline in the Dacca University after introduction of semester system. During the last three years attendance in classes in the university rose to record number.

Shah Aziz also said that during the Awami League regime election to Dacca University Students' Union was not held. Students' right to voice their demands were curtailed. The present government restored the right and election to DUCSU was held after six years.

Leader of the House refuting the allegation said that all the universities were autonomous during their regime. Universities, he said, decide about the examination, curriculum and even the expenditure of the government money which constitutes 90 per cent of the spending. But the universities are not accountable to government. He said the government decides only the policy.

Regarding appointment of Vice-Chancellors the Prime

Minister said that Professor Fazlul Halim Choudhury and Professor M. A. Bari were elected by the respective universities as number one candidate for appointment as Vice-Chancellors. He said that he had no alternative but to appoint the number one man. He said that late Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made the provision of appointing a Pro-Vice Chancellor to provide party supporters in administration in universities. He further said that Professor Afsaruddin was appointed Pro-Vice Chancellor in the Dacca University which was resented he said that negotiation with the university teachers were going on for a solution.

The Leader of the House said that another credit of the present government was introduction of scholarship for meritorious students in the country. An amount of 50 crore Taka would be given as scholarship in five years, he said.

## A victory

Earlier in the same session Mr. Asaduzzaman Khan, Leader of the Opposition while speaking on the bill suggested restoration of all the provisions of 1973 Dacca University Order which was amended by an ordinance in 1977. He observed that the 1973 order was the result of long years of struggle by teachers and students for autonomy of the universities. But by the 1977 ordinance the autonomy of the university was curtailed, he said. This has resulted in movement by the teachers and students due to which the government was restoring only two provisions of the earlier order. This was a victory of the struggle by the teachers and students.

A total of 11 Opposition members participated the discussion on the bill in the morning and nine members participated the discussion in the evening session. Those who participated the discussion (morning session) are: Mr. Muzaffar Ahmed (NAP), Mr. Almas Hossain (ML), Mr. Imajuddin Pramanik (AL-H), Mr. Asaduzzaman Advocate (AL-H), Mr. Rafiqullah Choudhury (Gano Front), Col. (Retd) Anwarullah (AL-H), Mr. Shudhangshu Shekhar Haldar (AL-H), Mr. Rashed Khan Menon (Ganotantrik Andolan), Principal Nazrul Islam (AL-H), Mr. Suranjit Sen Gupta (Jatiyo Ekota Party), Mr. A. S. M. Solaiman (Ganofront).

In the evening session Professor Mofizul Islam (BJL), Mr. Hahiahah Siraj and Mr. Golam Mostafa (JSD), Mr. Mozammel Haq (IDL) and from (AL-H) Mr. Salauddin Yusuf, Mr. A. B. M. Taleb Ali, Mr. Profullah Kumar Shil, Mr. Abdul Jabbar, Mr. Sirajul Islam and Mr. Habibur Rahman took part in the discussion. Proposals for circulation of the bill for eliciting public opinion were rejected by voice vote.