

15% tax on private universities a major challenge

Say trustees and academics



Photo: Orchid Changma

University trustees and academics today called for bridging the gap between students and university administrations to ease the growing unrest at private universities across the country.

They said teachers should make efforts to understand Generation Z students and offer regular counselling to help them cope with emotional stress and prevent unruly behaviour.



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At the same time, students were urged to refrain from activities that undermine the dignity of their teachers, while university authorities were asked to address student demands promptly to avoid escalation, said a press release.

These observations came at a roundtable titled "Challenges and Prospects of Private Universities in the Current Context", jointly organised by the Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh

(APUB) and the Bangladesh Society for Private University Academics (BSPUA), held at the APUB office in the capital's Banani.

Speaking at the event, APUB Chairman Md Sabur Khan identified the 15 percent tax imposed on private universities as a major challenge, saying it hinders the sector's development and limits the facilities universities can provide for students.

Many institutions are struggling to ensure necessary services due to the heavy tax burden. He urged the government to withdraw VAT and tax on higher education to support this sector's growth.

BSPUA President and United International University Professor Farid Ahammad Sobhani, who presided over the session, said delayed decision-making by university administrations often fuels unrest on campuses. Timely and effective decisions are essential for resolving students' justified demands. When authorities hesitate, small issues tend to spiral out of control, he said, urging students to remain patient and avoid confrontational movements.

During the discussion, speakers stressed the need for universities to introduce structured counselling services to support students' mental health and wellbeing, which, they said, could prevent dissatisfaction from turning into instability.

IUBAT Vice Chancellor Professor Abdur Rab delivered the keynote speech. Panel speakers included Professor Kamrul Ahsan, Vice Chancellor of Asia Pacific University; Professor Shahjahan Khan, Vice Chancellor of Asian University; Professor Yasmin Ara Lekha, Vice Chancellor of Uttara University; Professor AKM Waresul Karim, Dean of North South University; and Professor Zulfiqar Hasan, Dean of City University.

The discussion was moderated by Professor Nehreen Majed of Asia Pacific University, while Farhana Ferdousi, Director of the BBA programme at Southeast University, conducted the session.