

# "DU not an isolated island or ivory tower"

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Prof Aminul Islam

Dr. Aminul Islam, an eminent philosopher and professor of the department of Philosophy, Dhaka University, in an exclusive interview with the New Nation opined that the present admission system and procedure at the Universities of the country should be changed.

He said, "it's true that there is an inordinate delay in the admission of first year students at the universities of Bangladesh and that students have to waste more than a year to be admitted.

Prof Islam said that there should be a review of the whole procedure and system and the university admission of the students should be handled centrally by a Board of Admission comprising of representatives of all the technical and general universities of the country.

When asked to identify the pitfall of the present admission system, philosopher Islam said "one weakness of the present system is the fact that the same student applies to various universities for admission and is in most cases selected by more than one universities. Ultimately that student gets himself admitted in a place but his seat remains vacant in other universities depriving others of the seat.

This is particularly true in the case of the science departments where many students once selected in, say, Physics and Chemistry, ultimately go to either medical or engineering. Besides, under the present system a student has to move and hanker after all the universities for as long as six months just to appear at the tests and six months more for his results. This is nothing but a harassment for the students, he added.

Once there is a Central Body to look after the matter nationally, such a crisis would not remain and a great relief would definitely ensue in the long run, Dr Islam affirmed.

## UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY

In reply to a question relating autonomy he candidly said, "university autonomy is today a reality and so the question of its being otherwise does not arise. He further added, "no authority, however powerful and mighty it considers itself, has any moral right to deprive the university of its legitimate right of administering its own affairs."

When Prof Islam's, the Provost of DU's Surja Sen Hall attention was drawn to question of amendment of University Order 1973, he said "whether it needs or does not need any amendment is undoubtedly a matter of consideration and if the university community feels so, they would themselves sit and decide upon its fate."

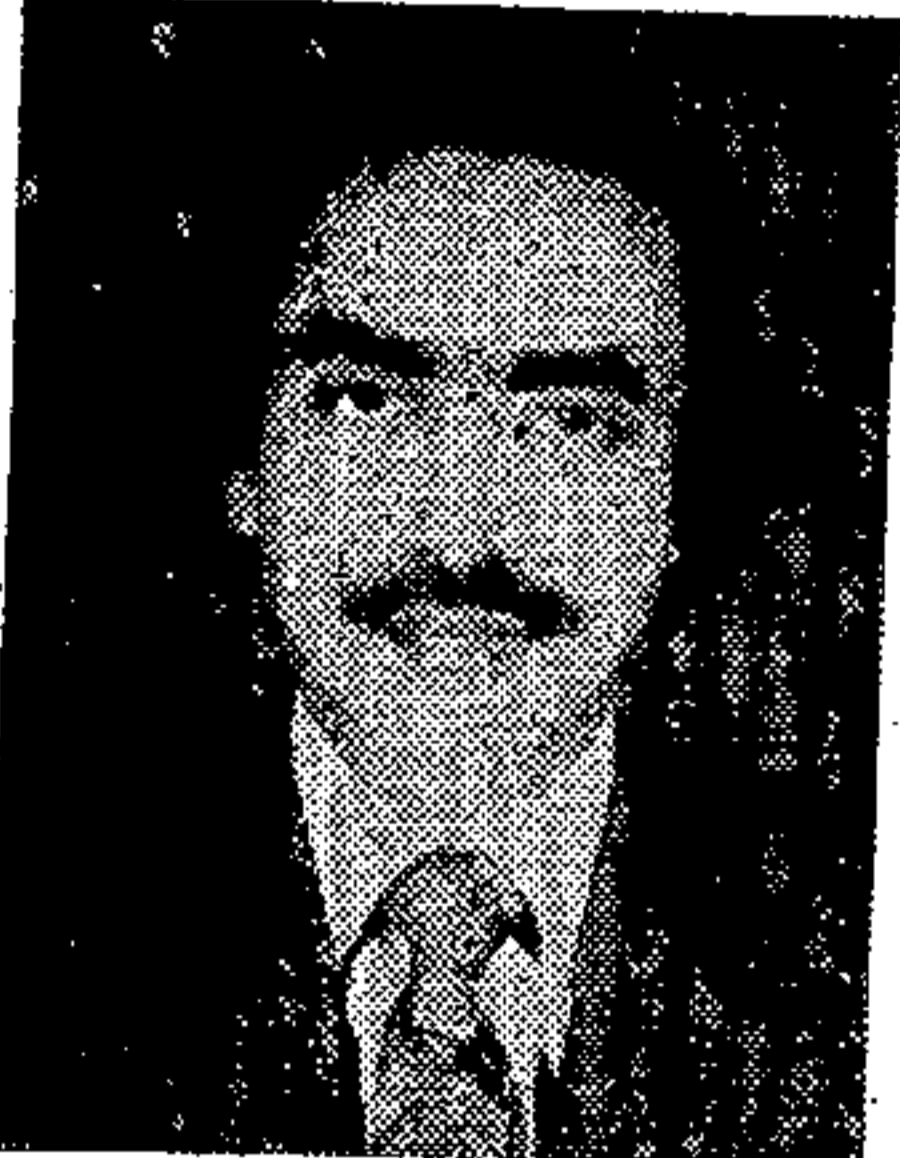
Dr Islam further said that it is they, who after a lot of deliberations proposed and drafted the ordinance and in consequence it received the approval of the then national non controversial parliament. He maintained "I am sure the university community and its well wishers would not accept any unilateral action of the government although there is apprehension that the Govt. might have some design to go for such a reckless action.

## DUCSU ELECTION

Prof Aminul Islam said the election of the Dhaka University Central Students Union

## SESSION JAM

Prof Aminul Islam who successfully played the role of Chairman of DU's Philosophy Dept from 1979 to 82 and was also the Director of the Centre for Advanced Research in Humanities of DU from 1984 to 87, said that DU administration



is very much conscious of session jam and holding examination on schedule. He said that they have taken a few measures which include sacrificing weekly holidays and holding extra classes to bring things up-to-date.

However, he admitted, "inspite of our best efforts, problems are still looming large because there are various forces and factors beyond our control. The university is not an isolated island and we do not live in an ivory tower. The university of Dhaka is after all a university of Bangladesh and so one can imagine it to remain unaffected by what is going on

in the country. So the worries and miseries which affect the whole nation also affect the university too leading to session jam."

## LAST SENATE ELECTION

When Dr Islam was asked to explain why his panel lost in the last Senate Election he said that in the world of democracy there is a sound competition among multiple groups or parties and there are always ups and downs for individuals as well as groups."

"The academic group I belong to has also its own record of success. Failure has never sealed the fate of any party nor has success given any party a blank cheque for unending victory. The sorry figure of my pink panel would, I am sure, give us a fresh opportunity to have a reappraisal and review of our activities so that in future it can overcome its present obstacles and get better prepared for collective welfare of the teaching community, he added. Prof Islam, it may be mantined here, is the lucky one out of two who, however, become Senate members from the pink panel.

## PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHERS' ROLE IN BANGLADESH

Author of more than 30 text books and research papers in philosophy Dr A Islam while talking on the role of philosophers in Bangladesh said, "let me first mention a widespread misunderstanding about the

nature and role of philosophy. There are people who think that philosophy is merely a speculative quest and as such it has no bearing on our practical life. This is not true. At least the history of philosophy and records of past philosophers do not corroborate it."

He further added that in our national life also such a role of philosophers is badly needed today, practically at a time when we are going through a serious crisis in the socio-politico-cultural life of our nation.

He again pointed out that we are riddled with a lot of social, moral and political problems and there is continued unrest in all spheres of our lives. We hear of erosion of moral values, delinquency, drug-addiction, unemployment, lack of unity among political parties and a lot of similar other evils. All these have joined together to make us anything but a happy nation, he ruefully added.

"In such an atmosphere," he said "the philosophers of the country have a very significant role to play. They should particularly strive for a fresh philosophy which shall consist of the cardinal ideals of our national and cultural heritage and which will fit in with present day's need. The objective of such a philosophy would be to find ways and means for progress and welfare of our nation.

(Interviewed by M. Alam)