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Spirit of '73 Ord denied, JS told

Varsities must have accountability

Education Minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam said yesterday that the government did not want to interfere with the 'academic autonomy' of the universities but that there should be a system of accountability, reports BSS.

'We are not opposed to the spirit of the University Ordinance of 1973 but accountability has to be there since 98.2 per cent budget of the universities come from public exchequer' he told the Jatiya Sangsad while initiating a discussion on the 'situation in the educational arena..

The minister said the people who run the universities had no accountability as a result of which the spirit of the university ordinance was not reflected in the campuses.

Sheikh Shahid called upon all to discourage the students from getting involved in party politics so that they were not exploited by political leaders as pawns for their selfish ends.

He said President Ershad had set a unique example by disbanding the student front of the Jatiya Party and urged others to follow the suit in the greater interest of the nation.

The minister said the killing of a number of students in recent days in the campuses had created an unhealthy situation in the educational arena.

Giving an outline of the government's programme to promote education in the

country, Sheikh Shahid said the budget in this sector had been increased to Taka 1305 crore from Taka 228 crore in the past.

He said on the new year's day President Ershad had announced that primary education would be made compulsory and female education free upto class eight outside the municipal areas.

Sheikh Shahid referred to the recently held recruitment examinations for the primary teachers and said it was done through a computer system

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Educational arena

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eliminating the scope of corruption in their appointing.

He said the quota for women primary teachers had been raised to 60 per cent and textbooks were being supplied free of cost at the primary level.

Referring to the problem of session jam in the educational institutions, he said the polytechnic institutes had cleared their three years' session jam during the last one and a half years while the universities had been asked to take steps to remove the session jam.

The Minister said in the outgoing year, out of 365 days the Dhaka University held classes for 290 days, besides holidays and vacations.

Referring to the welfare of the teachers, he said President Ershad had enhanced the dignity of the teachers. He said, 70 per cent of salary and allowances of the teachers of private institutions were paid by the government.

Participating in the discussion, Mr Aaur Rahman (COP-Sirajganj) identified lack of sense of responsibility by the law-enforcing agencies, acting as lackeys of political parties by the students and incomplete education policy as the main reasons for spread of terrorism in the campus.

Saad Jaglul Faruq (JP-Bhola) suggested appointment of Vice-Chancellors directly by the Chancellor instead of the present practice of appointing them from a panel elected by the university senates. He said this would help bring an end to terrorism in the campus.

Mr. Sirajuddin Ahmed (Ind-Dhaka) called for offering better financial and other benefits to teachers to attract well-educated persons to the teaching profession.

Referring to campus violence, the independent member said, only 125 to 150 students of Dhaka University were involved in violent acts. He said the whole student community should not be blamed for the actions of a microscopic few. While asking all to find the reasons behind the campus violence, Mr Ahmed said, without improving library facilities, teachers-student ratio, improving living conditions in hostels and creation of job opportunities, it would not be possible to change the situation.

Principal Azharul Haq (JP-Faridpur) called for a uniform education system throughout the country to remove the existing disparity.

Principal Haq, who demanded a referendum on allowing politics in educational institutions. He also demanded establishment of a women's university in the light of declaring Islam as state religion.

Mr Golam Sarwar Milon (JP-Manikganj) said political parties must take a common and positive stand if we wanted our posterity to be literate.

Recalling the role of students in the pre-liberation period, Mr Milon asked why students, once loved by the society, was now being looked down upon. The students are now divided into innumerable groups and have become lackeys of different political parties.

While advocating for amendment of University Ordinance of 1973, Mr. Milon said education had to be modern and realistic, he said unless quality was improved and technical education promoted, overall situation would not improve.

Major (retd) Asgar Ali Khan (Ind-Gaibandha) referred to the killing of intellectuals on the eve of independence and said now talented students were being killed. He said the intention behind the new killings should be found out.

He alleged that primary teachers were not attending their schools in time and many of them spent much of their time in association activities he also alleged that the upazila education officers were involved in corrupt practices in the transfer of the primary teachers.

Mia Abbasuddin (Ind-Bagerhat) suggested formation of a national committee to recommend measures to bring an end to terrorism in the campus.

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