

UGC yet to publish ranking of pvt universities in 15 months

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THE University Grants Commission is yet to introduce a ranking system for the private universities to promote quality of education there, 15 months into the plan taken by the regulatory authority.

UGC officials said that they were not able to publish the ranking as they were yet to complete surprise visits to all universities on what they would make a ranking.

Former UGC chairman said that ranking of the private universities would be helpful for students and guardians to choose the best institutions and would act as a valuable reference tool for comparative information on universities.

Acting UGC chairman Mohammad Mohabbat Khan and its secretary Mohammad Khaled both admitted that they had failed to publish the ranking list.

Replying to a question as to when the ranking system will be introduced, Mohab-

bat said, 'We are working on the ranking system that would be finalised very soon'.

UGC failed to come up with the ranking list when majority of the private universities are providing low quality of education, and officials said that there were widespread allegations of corruption against the universities. Many of the universities were allegedly engaged in 'selling graduation and post-graduation certificates.'

They were still running illegal outer campuses, which is prohibited by law. Some of them were mired in ownership conflicts, while only a handful of the universities have been into research, which is mandatory for them.

'Only 10-12 public universities are in the satisfactory level while the rest are providing low quality education', said a UGC member.

A UGC report sent to the parliamentary standing committee on education

ministry on June 26, 2014 said that the education provided by some private universities were low in quality while some of them were simply selling certificates.

A Transparency International Bangladesh study on the private universities in June 2014, found there had been transactions of Tk 50,000-Tk 3 lakh for issuing fake certificates.

Many private universities lacked research spendings, library and laboratories, and were not holding meetings of board of trustees and syndicates, running illegal outer campuses, lacked skilled and qualified teachers, were operating without service rules and salary structures for teachers, and were not appointing VCs, pro-VCs and treasurers in keeping with law, UGC chairman Abdul Marjan had said at a function in the capital on August 13.

Education minister Nazrul Islam Nahid at the same function had said they had seen that some of the uni-

versities were selling fake certificates, running illegal outer campuses and the government had taken steps against them. 'We do not want universities that are failing to deliver quality education and breaching laws... we will take action against them,' he added.

There are 83 private universities with over 4.60 lakh students.

Against this backdrop, UGC planned to publish a ranking of the private universities in June 2014 on the basis of surprise visits. It also formed six committees that would visit private universities for this purpose.

UGC initiated surprise visits to monitor the overall situations of private universities such as Board of Trustees, campus, academic activities, reserved funds, tuitions fees, audit, library, laboratory, service rules, maternity leave, and whether the universities were following Private University Act 2010 or not.

Former UGC chairman

Nazrul Islam said that a ranking system would help create competition among private universities and improve quality of education.

'Some of the private universities do not follow the laws and the quality of education they were providing were really poor. We initiated the plan to publish ranking as many students without having proper knowledge get admission to some low standard universities,' said former UGC chairman AK Azad Chowdhury.

Because of the problems in six or seven universities, people were becoming suspicious about all private universities, said Sheikh Kabir Hossain, chairman of Association of Non-Government Universities of Bangladesh.

UGC should conduct survey on academic standard of the universities and publish the ranking immediately so that people can take decision on which universities were good or bad, he said.