

Govt plans to allow foreign univ

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and joint-venture campuses were more lenient than those for local private universities which he thinks is frustrating.

He said that the 2010 act had stopped local private universities running outer campuses and the UGC had asked many of them to close down their branches, with the universities concerned complying.

Abul Quasem said that the 2010 law regard private universities as non-profit organisations and owners are not allowed to withdraw any portion of fund from the institutions. But the draft guideline for foreign university programmes provisions that owners can lawfully withdraw any portion of the fund from such institutions if they want.

Quasem, referring to Section of 4(7) of the guideline, said the guideline draft allowed the foreign institutions having campuses in Bangladesh to remit the surplus of the proportionate share in foreign currency as expenditure to the main institutions abroad.

The guideline said that foreign universities should have lawful approval in their country and accreditation of the authorities. There should also be contacts between the local and the over-

seas entrepreneurs and copies of the contracts should be sent to the education ministry and the University Grants Commission.

The guideline said that such foreign institutions would have the permission to run only one campus in Bangladesh.

The foreign universities, their branches and joint-venture campuses will get temporary approval for seven years.

A foreign university should have a fixed deposit receipt of Tk 7 crore, a branch should have a deposit of Tk 5 crore and a joint-venture campus a deposit Tk 3 crore with any banks in Bangladesh.

A private university owner, however, said that the guideline had been prepared to facilitate some businessman doing business in the name of education. 'If the University of Oxford, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Cambridge University come to operate in Bangladesh, we will welcome them. But if foreign universities such as Sikkim University comes to Bangladesh for operation, we will lodge our protests.'

He said, 'If the UGC allows such universities, other foreign universities from the Maldives, the Philip-

pinas and African countries will try to run campuses in Bangladesh. It will spell a disaster in the education sector.'

The government going is putting the guideline in place at a time when at least 60 foreign universities or their branches were in operation in Bangladesh without University Grant Commission approval and such institutions are alleged to have been involved in certificate business, some UGC officials said.

The education minister, Nurul Islam Nahid, on June 4 told the parliament that 25 foreign universities were running their activities in Bangladesh without the approval of the University Grant Commission or the education ministry.

He said that a nine-member committee had been set up to identify such unauthorised universities and their illegal offices in Bangladesh.

There are allegations that six 'fake' educational institutions in Dhaka, having no affiliation to any university either in Bangladesh or abroad are offering 'degrees for money.' Such institutions include the Chancery Academy of English Law at Dhanmondi, International University at Uttara, North American University at Lal-

matia and Victoria University at Dhanmondi.

The UGC in 2007 banned 56 foreign-university campuses in the capital Dhaka and in four other cities on charge of 'selling degrees' and not meeting quality standards.

UGC member (private university) Atful Hye Shibly said that there were many so-called educational institutions in operation in Bangladesh without any approval of the education ministry and the University Grants Commission.

'Monitoring and regulations are needed to check education business,' he said. 'But many without understanding the matter are opposing the guideline.'

The UGC chairman said that the guideline would not have any discriminatory provisions.