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Editor's Note

The Government of Bangladesh has introduced performance evaluation system, known as Annual Performance Agreement (APA), for all government offices since 2014-15 financial years. APA is 'a record of understanding' between two government offices (higher office and its subordinate office) to focus on activities from process-oriented to result-oriented. It also aims to ensure institutional transparency, accountability, proper utilization of resources and above all enhancing institutional efficiency.

The main purposes of introducing APA are: (a) shifting the focus of the government organization from process-orientation to result-orientation activities; and (b) providing an objective and fair basis to evaluate overall performance at the end of the year. During preparation of APA documents, each government organization has to select its respective strategic objectives for performance enhancement. APA provides a summary of the most important results that a government office expects to achieve during the financial year.

The University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, like other organizations, signs Annual Performance Agreement with the Ministry of Education every year. On the other hands, public universities of Bangladesh also sign APA with UGC every year. The UGC has signed Annual Performance Agreement (APA) for the financial year 2023-2024 with 46 public universities of the country at a hotel in the capital on 24 June 2023. Minister for Education Dr. Dipu Moni was present at the event as the Chief Guest with UGC Chairman Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah in the chair. UGC Members, Vice-chancellors of 54 public universities, registrars of 46 universities and focal points of APA were present at the event.

Speakers in event stated that the APA is a significant tool which can play a vital role in ensuring transparency, accountability and dynamism in the public organizations. In addition, APA can also play an important role in increasing responsibility and efficiency of the officials of the respective organization. They urged the universities to pay maximum attention to implement the APA to achieve desired goals.

Professor Dr. Md. Abu Taher
Member, UGC

President for formulating job-based academic curriculum in higher education



President Mohammed Shahabuddin asked the university authorities to formulate and implement employment-based academic curriculum so that students can get jobs immediately after completing their higher education.

The President, also the Chancellor of the universities, came up with the directives when a seven-member delegation of the University Grants Commission (UGC) led by its Chairman Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah paid a courtesy call on him at Bangabhaban on 29 May 2023.

Outlining various steps to ensure the quality education on campuses, President Shahabuddin suggested for conducting cluster-based university admission tests in the days to come, President's press secretary Md Joynal Abedin briefed the newsmen later.

The President, he said, was apprised of the overall activities of the commission by the UGC

Chairman during the meet.

The Head of State said, "We must be rich in knowledge of information technology (IT) to keep pace with the competitive world."

He directed the UGC to ensure that every university puts emphasis on research activities.

The President categorically talked about formulating the academic curriculum taking into account the demands of the local and international labor market.

President Shahabuddin further advised the universities to arrange regular convocations of the universities concerned.

He also congratulated Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah for getting reappointment as the UGC chairman for the second consecutive term.

Secretaries concerned to the President Office were also present there.

Golden jubilee of UGC celebrated

Government focuses on quality enhancement of education: Education Minister

The education sector of the country has expanded numerically in the past few years due to various effective measures taken by the present government. It was necessary to take these initiative of numerical expansion to bring a large number of young people of the country under the coverage of higher education. But, improving the quality of education is now the top priority of the government. For this reason, multi-faceted measures are being taken and implemented including developing the necessary education infrastructure in the universities of the country, developing academic and infrastructural master plans, providing necessary training to teachers, creating an environment for innovation and research, and increasing collaboration between industry and academia.

Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni made the remarks while delivering address as the Chief Guest at a special discussion program arranged by UGC the occasion of its Golden Jubilee at UGC Auditorium on 18 May 2023.

Deputy Minister of Education Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury was present at the event as special guest with UGC Chairman Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah in the chair. UGC former chairman Emeritus Professor Dr. AK Azad Chowdhury was the guest of honor on the occasion. Emeritus Professor of Dhaka University Dr. Sirajul Islam Chowdhury and retired professor of Chittagong University and Vice-Chancellor of Premier University, Chittagong Anupam Sen was present as the discussants.

Minister of Education Dr. Dipu Moni said that the budget allocation for research has been doubled to encourage innovation and research activities at the university level. The overall budget of the education sector has also been significantly increased.



She expressed the opinion that rather than increasing the education budget, it is important to ensure the proper use of the allocated funds. She mentioned in her speech that mega projects will be taken up for the development of education in the future.

She urged the university authorities not to admit students beyond their capacity to improve the quality of higher education. She stressed on the expansion of higher education based on science and information technology to meet the challenges of globalization and the 4th industrial revolution. Otherwise, it will not be possible to develop human resources suitable for the rapidly changing global labor market. She urged the universities to follow the outcome based education curriculum instead of the old course curriculum in sync with the changes.

Deputy Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury in his speech urged the UGC and university authorities to set the academic goals along with infrastructural development while formulating project proposals. He urged the UGC to provide necessary support to the universities for increasing institutional capacity. He also advised the UGC to approve graduate courses and courses suitable for the 4th Industrial Revolution.

UGC Chairman Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah said that there are 44 lakh students studying in 168

public and private universities of the country, which is more than the total population of many countries in the world. He said that the government has taken various steps to develop this large number of working people as skilled human resources suitable for the modern labor market. The monitoring system of the UGC has been strengthened to ensure transparency, accountability and good governance in the overall affairs of the universities. A uniform financial policy and financial manual have been formulated to ensure financial discipline and identify irregularities/deviations in public universities, which will be implemented from 01 July 2023.

He also said that the legal structure and human resources of UGC established in 1973 are not sufficient to improve and control the quality of education and research in today's 168 universities. As in other countries of the world, there is a dire need to ensure the capacity, expertise and legal capacity and accountability of the UGC.

UGC Member and convener of the Golden Jubilee Celebration Implementation Committee Professor Dr. Md. Abu Taher delivered welcome speech while UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman moderated the event. Current and former members of UGC, Vice-chancellors of public and private universities and officials of the Ministry of Education and UGC participated in the event.

46 public universities signs APA agreement with UGC Education Minister for ensuring financial transparency in universities

Minister for Education Dr. Dipu Moni said the financial requirements and expenditure patterns may differ from institution to institution, but the standards of transparency and accountability in expenditure should be the same in all institutions. If the existing financial regulations of the government are properly followed in expenditure of money in the universities of the country, it will be possible to resolve all financial disputes. However, he said that it is very important to increase the skills of those who are taking care of financial matters.



He said this while speaking as the chief guest at the signing ceremony of the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) for the financial year 2023-2024 between the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) and 46 public universities of the country at a hotel in the capital on 24 June 2023.

UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman and the registrars of the respective universities signed the agreement on behalf of their respective institutions.

UGC Chairman Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah presided over the inaugural ceremony of the event which was addressed by UGC Members Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain, Professor Dr. Muhammed Alamgir, Professor Dr. Biswajit Chanda and Professor Dr. Md. Abu Taher and Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Professor Dr. Md. Akhtaruzzaman. UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman delivered the welcome speech on the occasion.

The education minister also said that the current government does not want to control the country's universities. Rather, he said that

the government is always ready to extent all necessary support to the universities to reach the desired place. He urged the university authorities to run the university following the government rules and regulations.

Highlighting the issue of shortage of senior teachers in new public universities, the Education Minister said, UGC can form a pool of senior teachers from various universities to ensure teaching by experienced teachers in new universities. They can teach in direct or blended mode. It will give opportunities to the students of new university to receive teaching from experienced teachers.

She also said that the prevailing perception about going down the quality of education if universities are established in different districts of the country is not correct. Although there are some problems in the beginning, the quality of education is achieved with time.

UGC Chairman Kazi Shahidullah said that utmost importance should be given to ensure that there is no irregularity in the expenditure of university funds.

Some universities have to face many negative situations regarding financial expenditure which are not expected.

Regarding increasing the budget allocation in education, he said that about 2 percent of total budget allocation is given in education every year which is insufficient compared to the requirement. To improve the quality of education, the budget should be allocated 4 percent or more. He talked about the formulation of outcome based budget for higher education institutions.

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Professor Akhtaruzzaman in his speech termed the higher education as a special opportunity. Higher education is not for everyone, it is not a right. But, making higher education accessible to all has the potential to decrease its quality. He said that higher education will not be sustainable unless it is hands-on education are provided.

Prof. Biswajit Chanda called for ensuring resource sharing to ensure proper utilization of the

existing resources of the university. He also emphasized the creation of an endowment fund by making alumni associations functional.

Professor Dr. Alamgir stated that universities should work together to meet the expectations of the nation. He urged the Vice-chancellors to create a stress-free working environment. Besides, raised the demand of giving senior scale to the senior teachers of universities to minimize the disparity in services.

Professor Dr. Sazzad Hossain said, UGC was working to standardize higher education and research and create an industry-academia platform. He

called upon the university authorities to focus on producing skilled graduates to meet the needs of the industry.

Professor Dr. Abu Taher said that the importance of implementing the annual performance agreement in the university is very important. Because, through APA universities commit to undertake certain activities to be completed in specific time frame. That is why everyone has to work together to achieve the goal. He suggested setting time-bound and achievable goals keeping in mind the goals of the previous year.

The Minister of Education awarded certificates and crests as prizes to

the Vice-Chancellors, Registrars and Focal Points of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, Dhaka University and Jagannath University who achieved the first, second and third place respectively in the implementation of the APA program in public universities in the fiscal year 2021-22.

Deputy Director of UGC and focal point of APA Golam moderated the function which was attended by senior officials of Ministry of Education and UGC. Vice-chancellors of 54 public universities, registrars of 46 universities and focal points of APA were present.

Tk 12,263 cr budget approved for UGC and public universities



The UGC has approved a budget of Tk 12,262 crore 78 lakh for the 53 public universities of the country and University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) for the upcoming fiscal year 2023-24. Out of the total budget 12 thousand 185 crore 33 lakh taka has been allocated for the public universities while UGC got and 77 crore 45 lakh taka for itself.

The main budget of the public university has a revenue budget of 6 thousand 109 crore 10 lakh rupees and a development budget of 6 thousand 76 crore 23 lakh rupees against 31 projects.

The budget was approved in the

165th full commission meeting of UGC on 25 May 2023 which was presided over by the UGC Chairman Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah Chairman.

UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman presented the working papers of the meeting. UGC Member and also the In-charge of Finance and Accounts Division of UGC Professor Dr. Md. Abu Taher presented the revised budget of 2022-2023 fiscal year and the main budget of 2023-24 fiscal year in the meeting.

In the revised budget 09 thousand 265 crore and 17 lakh taka has been allocated for 53 public

universities in the current fiscal year 2022-23. In this case, the allocation for public universities in the financial year 2023-24 has been increased by Tk 2 thousand 920 crores.

In the financial year 2023-24, Dhaka University has got the highest revenue budget amounting Tk 853.80 million and Dhaka University has been allocated the highest budget of Tk 15 crore in the research sector.

The UGC also approved Tk 174 crore for research support in the upcoming fiscal year. The figure increased by Tk 24 crore in comparison to the outgoing fiscal year. In the last 2022-23 fiscal year Tk 150 crore was allocated the main budget for conducting researches.

The universities were directed to follow the 55 guidelines and austerity measures while spending the budgetary allocation.

While talking about the budget allocation, Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah said that more than 12 thousand crores of taka have been allocated in the financial year

2023-2024 for the management and development of higher education institutions of the country. Considering the current situation of the country he called upon the universities to maintain maximum austerity while spending the allocated fund. He also said that the allocation for research sector has been substantially increased in the budget this year. He urged to ensure the maximum utilization of the money allocated in the research sector. He called upon the universities to follow the guidelines mentioned in the circular in utilizing the fund allocated in the budget and not to adjust among the sub-heads of the budget.

UGC Member professor Dr. Dil Afroza Begum, Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain, Professor Dr. Muhammed Alamgir, Professor Dr. Biswajit Chanda, Vice-Chancellor of National University Prof. Dr Md. Mashiur Rahman, Vice-Chancellor of Rangamati Science and Technology University Professor Dr. Selina Akhtar, Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh University of Professionals Major General Md Mahbub-ul Alam, Dean of the School of Education of the Bangladesh Open University Prof. Sufia Begum and Vice-Chancellor of Islamic Arabic University Muhammad Abdur Rashid were present at the meeting.

Apart from this, Member of Planning Commission (Socio Economic Infrastructure Division) and Senior Secretary Mosammat Nasima Begum and Secretary of Secondary and Higher Education Division Solaiman Khan were present in the meeting.

In addition, based on the recommendation of the 1st selection committee of the Commission appoint of Zafor Ahommad Jahanger and Dr. Durga Rani Sarkar as the directors and Mohammad Kabirul Hasan and Shah Mohammad Aminul Islam as additional directors were approved in the meeting.

Uniform admission test for all public universities from next year: Education minister



A uniform admission test will be held for all public universities of the country from the academic year 2023-2024, said Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni.

A National Testing Authority (NTA) will be constituted to conduct the examination, the minister said while addressing a meeting held at the University Grants Commission (UGC) on 3 April 2023.

She said a committee, headed by the UGC chairman, will soon be formed for conducting the admission tests.

"The examination procedure will be discussed with Deans and examination committees of all public universities," she added.

The minister expressed hope that

the uniform entrance exam schedule will be published after the HSC exams are held, and classes will start at the same time in all public universities.

Chaired by UGC Chairman Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah, the meeting was attended by UGC Members Professor Dr. Dil Afroza Begum, Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain, Professor Dr. Muhammed Alamgir, Professor Dr. Biswajit Chanda, Professor Dr. Md. Abu Taher, Additional Secretary of the Secondary and Higher Education Division of the Ministry of Education Md. Abu Yousuf Miah and UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman.

Those who have agreed to hold uniform admission test include

Dhaka University Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) Professor Dr. ASM Maksud Kamal, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology Vice-Chancellor Dr Satya Prasad Majumdar, Bangladesh Agricultural University Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Lutful Hasan, Shahjalal Science and Technology University Vice-Chancellor Professor Farid Uddin Ahmed, National University Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Moshir Rahman, Bangladesh University Council President and Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology Vice-Chancellor Md Habibur Rahman.

On maintaining the standard of such an admission test, Dipu Moni said, "The SSC and HSC exams are being held simultaneously all over the country. No one raises questions about the quality of those tests. So, if a uniform admission test is conducted for university enrolment, there should be no scope for raising questions about its standard."

Stating that the individuality, independence and autonomy of public universities will not be affected if a uniform admission

test is conducted, the minister said the admission test will be made inclusive and all relevant subjects will be included as well.

This initiative was taken for the benefit of students and parents, she added.

UGC Chairman Dr Kazi Shahidullah said, "If the admission test is held simultaneously in all public universities, classes can begin shortly after. The test will gain acceptance from all if it can

be carried out successfully."

UGC Member Professor Dr. Dil Afroza Begum presented a concept note on uniform admission test in the meeting.

1st ISM meeting of HEAT project held



The 'Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation (HEAT)', a project to be implemented by the Bangladesh University Grants Commission would be able to play an effective role in improving the quality of education and research in the higher education institutions of the country, accelerating the transformation of higher education, strengthening the regional network and increasing the participation of women as entrepreneurs.

UGC Member Professor Dr. Muhammed Alamgir in his Presidential speech expressed the optimism at the 1st Implementation Support Mission (ISM) meeting of HEAT project. The project will be implemented with joint funding of Bangladesh Government and World Bank. The meeting was held 20 June 2023 at the UGC meeting room.

Vice-Chancellor of Asian University for Women (AUW) Dr. Rubana Haque, World Bank Senior Operations Officer Dr. Mokhlesur Rahman, UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman, Director of Planning and Development Department

Maksudur Rahman Bhuiyan and relevant officials of UGC, World Bank and AUW were present at the meeting.

Professor Alamgir said that the HEAT project will have a very important impact on various sectors of higher education including education and research in the country. Through this project, Bangladesh's higher education will be connected to regional and global networks for the first time. Through this project the collaborative relations of the universities of Bangladesh and the higher education institutions of different countries of the world will be strengthened.

He further said that one of the major challenges of Bangladesh's economic development is to overcome the loss of the education sector due to the Covid-19 pandemic and to create decent job opportunities for those who have completed higher education. This project will play an important role in this regard.

Vice-Chancellor of Asian University for Women Dr. Rubana Haque said that the regional network will be

strengthened through the HEAT project and the path of women's empowerment will be paved through this project. She also said that creating job opportunities for highly educated people and increasing the percentage of female students in the field of communication technology will significantly increase. He believes that the project will be a regional model for women's higher education and skill development.

Dr. Mokhlesur Rahman, Senior Operations Officer of World Bank, requested UGC to launch the work of the HEAT project quickly and take necessary initiatives to appoint the project director. He said that although there are several challenges in the implementation of the project, the World Bank will work closely with the UGC for this purpose.

At the end of the meeting, the World Bank and concerned delegation held a courtesy meeting with UGC chairman Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah. The UGC Chairman urged everyone to work with sincerity to ensure the successful implementation of this project to improve the quality of higher education and research.

Note that the five-year long project will start from July this year. The cost of the project is estimated at 4 thousand 16 crore 57 lakh taka. The project will be implemented by UGC. Out of the total expenditure, 2 thousand 33 crore 46 lakh taka will be borne by the Bangladesh government and 1 thousand 983 crore 11 lakh taka by the World Bank.

UGC Chairman calls for acquiring skills in modern technology



Chairman of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah has urged all concerned in higher education institutions of the country to acquire skills in modern technology to lead the fourth industrial revolution.

He made the remarks while addressing a day-long workshop to finalize the data for the 49th annual report of the UGC as the chief guest.

The workshop held on 7th May was attended by the representatives of 53 public and 2 international universities.

UGC Member Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain and UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman

were present at the event as Special Guests with the Director of the Research Support and Publication Division Dr. Md. Fakhruul Islam in the chair.

Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah said that the teachers, officers and employees of the university should be enriched with the latest knowledge of information technology to face the challenges of the future. The career of students will also be enriched if they have technical knowledge. He also said that the days ahead will be highly dependent on technology. Individuals and organizations skilled in the use of technology will stay advanced. Besides, he said that the university should come forward to

implement D-Nothi and e-governance.

Besides, he urged the concerned officials to be sincere in timely and accurate publication of UGC's annual report with the assistance of information technology.

Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain said that the annual report of UGC is used as a reference document in the field of higher education and research in the country and abroad. Therefore, it is desirable that the annual report be accurate. Information related to subject-wise graduates coming out of the university every year, the actual number of researchers and teachers and per capita student expenditure should be thoroughly presented in the report.

Shahin Siraj, Additional Director of the Research Support and Publication Division was the moderator of the workshop while Mohammad Nazrul Islam and Biswanath Biswas, Senior Assistant Directors of UGC discussed in detail about annual report and filling of information table.

The annual report will include information related to education, research and infrastructure of 53 public and 108 private universities of the country including UGC for the year 2022.

UGC suggests to include AI in curriculum

UGC Member Professor Dr. Muhammed Alamgir remarked that Artificial intelligence (AI) will affect the future dynamics of higher education in Bangladesh like the developed countries of the world.

Therefore, without delay, Professor Alamgir urged the educationists of the country to come forward to suggest how artificial intelligence can be incorporated to our higher education curriculum in

coordination with the global environment.

He said this while speaking as the Chief Guest at the inauguration of a day-long training on the prospects and threats of artificial intelligence and robotics to face the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution.

The innovation wing of UGC organized the training at the

Commission's auditorium on 12 June 2023.

Director of Planning and Development Division Mohammad Maksudur Rahman Bhuiyan presided over the inaugural ceremony of the event while UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman and Director of Public Relations and Right to Information Division Dr. Shamsul Arefin were Special Guests.



Professor Alamgir in his speech stated that everything was changing rapidly due to the influence of fourth industrial revolution. If higher education cannot keep pace with these changes, we will fall behind. We need to start the work of reforming the higher education system and curriculum without any delay.

He also said that in 52 years of independence, we have to think about where China, South Korea, India, Malaysia have reached in higher education. We need to

review why we have not reached their level in higher education. In the era of artificial intelligence and robotics, we need to focus more on building skilled human resources, or we will fall dangerously behind indeed.

Dr. Ferdous Zaman said, in the era of fourth industrial revolution Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence and robotics occupy an important place. As a result, the demand for skilled manpower will increase in the developed world.

Care must be taken that our remittance fighters are not a burden to the country.

Dr. Shamsul Arefin said, we should develop ourselves efficiently so that modern technology should not put our employability at risk. The challenges of artificial intelligence and robotics must be taken up and reaped the benefits.

The chairperson of Robotics and Mechatronics Engineering Department of Dhaka University Dr. Senjuti Rahman was present as a discussant in the workshop which was moderated by Rabiul Islam, Senior Assistant Director and Innovation Focal Point of UGC.

A total of 60 officials from UGC participated in the workshop.

UGC calls for developing a culture of information disclosure in universities

Member of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh Professor Dr. Md. Abu Taher called upon the university authorities of the country to develop a culture to disclose information proactively to brighten the image of the institutes.

He made the call while delivering speech as the Chief Guest at a training on the Right to Information Act and Workplan as part of the implementation of the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) of the UGC for the financial year 2022-2023. This training was organized at UGC on 20 June 2023.

UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman was present at the inaugural ceremony of the training as special guest with Director of Public Relations and Information Rights Division Dr. Shamsul Arefin in the chair.

Professor Abu Taher, Convener of the Annual Performance Agreement, said that the culture of



non-disclosure continues in various institutions of the country. All public and private universities should come forward in making the information disclosed.

He also said that Right to Information Act should be implemented to ensure transparency and accountability in academic and administrative work of public universities. If the Right to Information Act can be implemented, the reputation of higher education institutions will

increase. He called upon the concerned authorities to open all the publishable information on the university's website.

Dr. Ferdous Zaman said that constitution of the country has recognized its citizen as the owner of the state. Therefore, people have the right to know about the activities of state institutions. He said that the Right to Information Act has been enacted to govern the state and establish the rights of the people.

Dr. Shamsul Arefin said that the right to receive information is a constitutional and legal right of the citizen. He opined that everyone has to play a responsible role to ensure free flow of information in higher education institutions.

Besides, he emphasized on increasing public awareness in implementation of Right to Information Act.

Mohammad Abdul Mannan, Deputy Director, Public Relations

and Right to Information Division and Focal Point of RTIA conducted session at the training course. 20 officers of the Commission participated in this training.

Australia to implement joint activities with Bangladeshi universities



The Government of Western Australia has expressed interest in implementing joint collaborative activities with the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh and the public and private universities of the country to improve the quality of higher education. The UGC and the delegation of Western Australia agreed to strengthen the relations among the universities of the two countries through undertaking collaborative research projects, exchange programs for teachers and students, joint academic programs and other areas of education and research including PhD degrees. Both parties have agreed to sign necessary agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) for the implementation of these activities.

The issues related to joint collaboration for the quality enhancement of higher education were discussed in a round table discussion between the Government of Western Australia and UGC in the conference room of UGC on 06 June 2023. Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia Professor Amit Chakma led the 11-member Australian delegation on behalf of the Culture and the Arts; Sports

and Entertainment; Internal Education and Heritage Affairs Minister of the Government of Western Australia David Templeman.

UGC Chairman Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah was present at the round table discussion as the Chief Guest under the chairmanship of Professor Dr. Muhammed Alamgir, Vice-Chancellor of Jagannath University Professor Dr. Md. Imdadul Hoque, Vice-Chancellor of Independent University Professor Tanweer Hasan, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Asia-Pacific Professor Dr. Kamrul Ahsan along with senior faculty members nominated by the Vice-Chancellors of Dhaka University, Bangladesh University of Engineering, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Bangladesh University of Textiles, Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology and East West University were present at the meeting.

UGC Chairman Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah in his speech stated that Bangladesh has achieved commendable success in various fields in the last few years. In the current reality, Bangladeshi students do not want to depend only on foreign scholarships to get higher education. The current

government has introduced scholarships for teachers and students to create opportunities for pursuing higher education in foreign universities.

Professor Amit Chakma, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia remarked that it was the right time for the universities of Australia to work jointly with the universities of Bangladesh. By signing agreements and memorandums of understanding at the institutional level, the universities of the two countries can undertake joint research programs, exchange programs for teachers and students, joint academic programs and awarding of PhD degrees. He sought the cooperation of UGC in taking and implementing necessary initiatives in this regard. Professor Amit Chakma also informed the meeting that he will take initiatives at his personal level to advance the joint cooperative venture.

UGC Member Professor Dr. Muhammed Alamgir in his speech said that one third of the total population in Bangladesh is studying at various levels of education. The number of students in the higher education sector of the country is more than 44 lakh. Providing quality higher education to this large number of students is our main challenge. In this regard, he assured the Australian delegation that the UGC will provide all possible support to advance the joint collaborative proposal of foreign higher education institutions.

Director of the Planning and Development Division of UGC Mohammad Maksudur Rahman Bhuiyan delivered the welcome speech at the event which was moderated by Director of Australian Trade and Investment Commission Mostafizur Rahman.

UGC formulates training modules for university teachers

As part of implementing Action Plan No. 7 of Five Year Fast Track Action Plan of the 'Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Bangladesh: SPHE 2018-2030', the Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Division of the University Grants Commission has been developing a training module for providing training to university teachers through six expert committees under the direction of the core committee.

The committees have submitted their assigned sub-modules to the core committee. The core committee met on 26 April 2023 to finalize and compile the module at the UGC meeting room, intending to start four-month foundation training initially for the Lecturers and Assistant Professors.



The meeting was presided over by the convener of the committee and Member of the Commission Professor Dr. Biswajit Chanda. UGC Members Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain and Professor Dr. Muhammed Alamgir, Members of Bangladesh Accreditation Council Professor Dr. Sanjoy Kumar Adhikary and Professor SM Kabir,

UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman, Director of SPQA Division Dr. Durga Rani Sarker and concerned officials of SPQA division were also present in the meeting. The assigned committee will formulate guidelines and publish it into a book format as soon as possible.

UGC recommends making university website smart for ranking



The University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) has called upon the universities to upload the all required information including research, innovation, teacher-student ratio on the respective websites of the universities to have a better position in the world university rankings. It is also suggested to include these information in the annual report of UGC.

UGC Member Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain made the remark while addressing a day-long workshop on the review of the annual report as the chief guest at UGC auditorium on 24 March 2023.

He said that various global organizations rank the higher education institutions of Bangladesh through the review of the contents uploaded on website

of the country's universities and the information of the annual reports. For this reason, he suggested that the annual report should be informative and regularly updated and the university website should be made smart. He also said that UGC is working to bring universities under automation and produce skilled human resources to lead Smart Bangladesh.

Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain said that the annual report of UGC is sent to the National Parliament, the President, and various organizations at home and abroad. For this, it is necessary to publish the annual report timely and accurately. He urged concerned officials to be more sincere to make the annual report flawless.

The registrars and annual report focal points of 55 private universities of the country were present in the workshop. UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman was present as the special guest at the

inaugural ceremony of the workshop with Dr. Md. Fakhru Islam, Director of the Research Support and Publication Division, in the chair.

Dr. Ferdous Zaman in his speech said that public universities were under pressure after the establishment of private universities in the country. Two international universities and one branch campus of a foreign

university have now been established in the country. Several other branch campuses of foreign universities are awaiting approval from the government. Private universities may face challenge if they cannot ensure the quality and environment of education.

Additional Director of UGC's Research Support and Publication Division Shahin Siraj moderated the workshop and Senior

Assistant Directors Mohammad Nazrul Islam and Biswanath Biswas discussed in detail about filling the annual report and information table.

According to the UGC Act 1973 there is an obligation to present the annual report to the National Parliament. Every year a delegation led by the UGC Chairman submits a report to the President.

Private universities can offer joint PhD degrees with Malaysian universities

Member of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) Professor Dr. Biswajit Chanda remarked that the private universities in Bangladesh having permanent certificate can offer PhD degrees jointly with top universities in Malaysia.

He made the remark at a meeting held at UGC on 25 May 2023 with a four-member delegation from Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS). Dr. Abdur Razzaq, Chairman of EMGS and also the special envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia led the delegation.

Professor Dr. Biswajit Chanda said that currently the private universities do not have the approval to grant PhD degrees. But they are interested in carrying out research works like public universities. The top private universities having permanent certificates may offer joint PhD degrees with Malaysian



universities subject to conditions. He expressed optimism that research opportunities will be created through this initiative. He expressed his interest in signing an agreement with the Malaysian government on the awarding of joint PhD degrees.

He urged the delegation to ensure suitable environment for higher education of Bangladeshi students studying in Malaysia and create job opportunities along with studies. Bangladeshi students and other citizens studying in Malaysia should be treated with dignity.

Dr. Abdur Razzaq said, Malaysia is trying to promote international standards of higher education. Malaysia has branch campuses of several top ranking public, private and international university. To maintain the quality of higher education, Malaysia has taken the initiative of offering joint PhD degree along with simplifying the visa process and talent hunt.

UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman and Director of Research Support and Publication Division Dr. Md. Fakhru Islam and relevant officials were present at the meeting.

Colombo confce on higher edn focuses mutual cooperation

A two-day regional conference on 'Regional Cooperation or Improvement of Higher Education' for the development of university education was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The conference was organized to strengthen the UGC network in the South Asian region and to discuss

the collaborative attitude and more opportunities for the development of university education in the region. The conference emphasized on human resource development and digital transformation in the region.

The conference was jointly organized by the University Grants

Commission of Sri Lanka and the World Bank. The conference was held on 06-07 June at Taj Samudra, Colombo.

UGC representatives from seven countries including the World Bank and academicians and international experts from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan,



Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka participated the conference.

Sri Lankan Education Minister Sushil Premjayanta delivered closing remarks at the conference. Sri Lankan UGC Chairman Professor Sampath Amaratunge and World Bank's Nina Arnhold spoke at the event which was presided over by the Country Director of World Bank Chiyo Kanda.

UGC Member Professor Dr. Muhammed Alamgir led the three-member Bangladesh delegation at the conference.

Professor Subrata K. Aditya and Professor Abdul Hasnat M. Solaiman participated in the symposium. On the occasion, Professor Alamgir delivered a presentation on UGC's initiatives and future plans for higher education and research in Bangladesh and took part in panel and open discussions.

At the conference, the World Bank presented a comprehensive report on integration in the development of higher education in the region. Issues related to higher education situation in South Asia region,

higher education exchange, networking were highlighted in the conference. In addition, a recent university reform program in Sri Lanka was also reviewed.

UGC Member Professor Alamgir in his deliberation emphasized on the best practices in developing quality higher education and research in the region, student-faculty relationships, cross-country collaboration among universities-, digitalization, green transition and networking. In addition, emphasis is placed on enhancing regional cooperation for quality in higher education and research.

Professor Alamgir said that the World Bank believes that despite the extensive cooperation in climate change, trade, economic connectivity and transportation in the region, it has not been enough for human development in the last decade.

He said that the plan to organize such a symposium under the leadership of University Grants Commission of Bangladesh in Dhaka next year has been taken in this year's regional conference.

UGC calls for implementation of digital signature to build smart Bangladesh

UGC Member Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain remarked that there was no alternative to digital signature for the establishment of Smart Bangladesh by 2041.

He said this while delivering speech as the Chief Guest at the inaugural ceremony of a day-long training on digital signature registration. The Controller of Certifying Authorities (CCA) organized the training at the UGC Auditorium on 12 June 2023.

Ataur Rahman Khan, Controller (Additional Charge) CCA presided over the inaugural ceremony of the event. UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman, Director of IMCT Division



Dr. Md. Sultan Mahmud Bhuiyan and Deputy Controller of CCA office Md. Mokhtar Ahmed spoke at

the event. A total of 108 first class officials including UGC directors participated in the training.

Regarding digital signature, Professor Sazzad Hossain said that smart government is an important pillar in realizing the desired goal of creating a smart Bangladesh. Another important element is the digital signature. Digital signatures are required to ensure secure exchange of information. It will ensure legal recognition of electronic records, secure email communications, prevent fraud and curb corruption. He said that it will be possible to

get protection from the risks of cyber-attacks, e-transactions etc. using digital signatures.

In the event, Professor Sazzad Hossain urged the university authorities to ensure digital signatures in the country's higher education institutions in order to build a smart Bangladesh. He said, if digital signature is ensured, transparency and accountability will increase and official work can be done quickly. Through this,

good governance will be established in higher education institutions.

He also said that if the digital signature is introduced, the identity of a teacher and student can be confirmed and the implementation of paperless office of the government will be possible. Both the data tampering and data intrusion can be prevented through introducing of the system.

Teachers should have relevance of their PhD degrees with teaching: UGC

The University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) opined that the PhD degrees earned by the teachers of the country's government schools and colleges should have relevance with their field of teaching.

Member of the UGC Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain made the remark while delivering speech as the Chief Guest at the opening ceremony of an academic seminar entitled 'Assessing the relevance of PhD dissertation carried out by the teachers with the fields of their teaching'.

The academic seminar was organized by the UGC to assess the relevance of PhD dissertation carried out by the 11 teachers of various government schools and colleges with their teaching field.

Vice-Chancellor of Islamic Arabic University Professor Dr. Muhammad Abdur Rashid, Vice-Chancellor Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib University of Science and Technology Prof. Dr. Md. Kamrul Alam Khan, Professors of Dhaka University Dr. Abdul Halim, Dr. Rubina Khan and Dr. Akhtar Hossain, Professor of Chittagong University Dr. Mohammad Jalal Ahmed, Professors of Jahangirnagar University Dr. Bashir Ahmed, Dr. Alamgir Kabir and Dr. Syed Hafizur Rahman,



Professor of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology Dr. Ashraful Alam and Professor of Jagannath University Dr. Milton Biswas were present at the seminar. Director of Research Support and Publication Division of UGC Dr. Md. Fakhrul Islam presided over the seminar.

In the speech of the chief guest, Professor Sazzad Hossain said that UGC was working to build a culture of quality education and research in the country. Teachers of government school-college need to rationalize whether their PhD degree is compatible with their field of teaching. Financial incentives are provided to pursue a Ph.D. As financial matters are involved, it is necessary to ensure that the degrees are relevant with the professional field of the teachers.

He also said that there is no alternative to the research and innovation of university teachers in building a smart Bangladesh.

Research and innovation are needed in view of the needs of the country. It should be seen whether the PhD degree earned by the teachers is of any benefit to the nation. He said that the relevance of PhD degrees earned by teachers of government school-college will be done assessed by the UGC expert committee.

He also said that UGC is working to ensure quality education and conducting research activities in the country. An amount of Tk 10 crore has been allocated to provide scholarships to university teachers to pursue higher studies in foreign universities. Besides, UGC has substantially increased the allocation for research this year which amounts to Tk 174 crore.

Additional Director of Research Support and Publication Division Md. Shahin Siraj moderated the seminar which was also attended by the officials of concerned divisions of UGC.

Dr. Kazi Shahidullah reappointed as UGC Chairman

Prominent historian Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah has been appointed as the Chairman of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) for the second term. The Ministry of Education issued an office order appointing him to the post on 25 May 2023.

He has been appointed to this position for the next four years.

As per the terms of the notification, his appointment will be effective from the date of joining and he will be entitled to the same benefits for the second term as he is currently receiving salary and fringe benefits. According to section 4(1)(A) and 4(3) of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh Act, 1973, the government has appointed him to this post which has been mentioned in the appointment order issued by the Ministry of Education.



Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah assumed responsibility as the 13th Chairman of UGC on 26 May 2019. He was a Supernumerary Professor in the Department of History and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Dhaka University. Dr. Kazi Shahidullah also served as the Vice-Chancellor

of the National University.

He obtained his PhD from Australia and his research topic was primary education in colonial Bengal.

During the last four years as chairman, he has taken several significant steps to improve the quality of education and research in the country's universities, which are at various stages of implementation. Research allocation in the country's public universities has been significantly increased over the last few fiscal years.

Other major initiatives UGC has taken are – introduction of overseas PhD scholarships, holding cluster system admission test to reduce the suffering of students and save money, formulation of uniform financial policies and financial manuals, audit manuals, PUFR templates and transfer of funds through electronically.

Professor Sazzad Hossain and Professor Muhammed Alamgir reappointed as UGC members



Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain and Professor Dr. Muhammed Alamgir have been re-appointed as full-time members of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC).

The Ministry of Education has issued two separate orders on 05 June 2023 in this regard. They have been appointed as members for the next four years. They will be entitled to salary and other benefits similar to the first term.

It should be noted that the first term of Professor Sazzad Hossain and Professor Muhammed Alamgir will end on 11th and 15th of June 2023 respectively.

Before joining the Bangladesh University Grants Commission as a Member on June 12, 2019, Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain served as the Head of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh and International Islamic University Chittagong.

He studied at Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology. In addition, Dr. Sazzad holds a Bachelor degree in Electrical System Network Engineering from Moscow Technical University, Russia and a Masters and PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Portland State University, Oregon, USA. His field of research was quantum computing.

Before joining the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh as a Member on 16 June 2019, Professor Alamgir served as the Vice-Chancellor of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology for consecutive two



terms. In addition to teaching, he served as Dean, Head of Department, Syndicate Member, Provost and President of Teachers Association of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology.

He served as the Chairman of the 7th International Conference on Solid Waste & Faecal Sludge Management. He served as the founding editor-in-chief of the Journal of Engineering Science.

He received his BSc and MSc degrees from the Department of Civil Engineering, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and his PhD from Saga University, Japan.

UGC Officials visit Pran Industrial Park

UGC Secretary Dr. Ferdous Zaman has urged the country's big industrial establishments including PRAN-RFL to come forward in higher education and research.

He made this call during a knowledge sharing visit Pran-RFL Industrial Park as the chief guest. This program was organized recently as part of e-Governance and Innovation and National Integrity Strategy Work Plan of UGC in the fiscal year 2022-2023.

A total of 27 UGC officials including Director of UGC Zafar Ahommad Jahanger, and Additional Directors Ziaur Rahman and Md. Shahin Siraj were present. Besides, Marketing Director of Pran-RFL Group Kamruzzaman Kamal, General Manager of Pran Industrial Park Wing Commander (retd) Md. Siddiquir Rahman, PRAN-RFL Group Manager (Public Relations) Maqsood Jowardar and others were present.

On the occasion, Dr. Ferdous Zaman said, there is no alternative to industry-academia collaboration to ensure quality higher education and research in the country and to



achieve a desired position in world university rankings. In this regard, renowned industries including PRAN-RFL Group should come forward for the welfare of the country and nation as part of their corporate social responsibility. Besides, he called upon these companies to finance research works of universities to encourage innovation.

He also said that there are more than 44 lakh students in higher education institutions of the country. Domestic industrial institutes can arrange internship for these students. Through this they will be able to gain practical experience in industrial establishments before entering employment.

Marketing Director of PRAN-RFL

Group Kamruzzaman Kamal said that PRAN-RFL Group has collaboration with various universities of the country. He expressed interest in working with UGC in the future on how to strengthen this cooperative relationship.

He also said that PRAN-RFL Group will continue to play a role in poverty alleviation and creation of skilled human resources in the country by creating employment opportunities. This industrial group will continue to take various initiatives to improve the quality of life of marginalized people. He said that initiatives have been taken to establish PRAN-RFL Group as an international brand worldwide and represent Bangladesh.

UGC Chairman condoles death of Education Minister's mother

Chairman of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of Rahima Wadud, wife of language movement hero MA Wadud and also the mother of Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni MP.

Rahima Wadud breathed her last at her residence in Kalabagan of the capital on 06 May 2023 (Innalillahi wa Inna Ilahi Rajeun). He was 89 years old at the time of his death.

UGC Chairman Professor Dr. Kazi



Shahidullah said, Rahima Wadud was an honest, ideal and dedicated teacher. During her teaching career, she has made an important contribution in shaping the minds of many students. In his death the nation has lost a selfless, patriotic and dedicated teacher.

In his condolence message, the UGC Chairman salvation of the departed for the bereaved soul of late Rahima Wadud and expressed deep condolences to the bereaved family members.

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Chairman, UGC

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