

Vital to get DU free of partisan politics

Dr Kamal tells inaugural lecture of trust fund named after Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, wife

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Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain wants the Dhaka University to get rid of partisan politics and turn it into an international-level academic institution as it celebrates its centenary in 2021.

"Let us begin a campaign to establish the university as an international standard academic institution," he said while delivering a lecture on "Dhaka University and its role in shaping Bangladesh society" yesterday.

The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (ASB) organised the inaugural lecture of "Mrs Noor Jehan Murshid and Professor Khan Sarwar Murshid Trust Fund" in its auditorium in the capital.



Dr Kamal

Teachers and students can surely do politics, but that should not be partisan loyalty or sycophancy, said Dr Kamal Hossain, also a former law teacher at DU.

"It is very regrettable that Dhaka University is not among the best 100 universities of the world," he said. "The university played a unique role since it was established in 1921."

Upon independence from British rule in 1947, Dhaka University was the only university in the eastern wing that gained recognition as an institution of excellence and intellectual leadership, said Dr Kamal.

The quality of its leadership was

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reflected in its role with regard to the issue of language movement since 1948. Pakistani armed forces unleashed crackdown in Dhaka University on March 25 in 1971 as its students were seen to be the most committed political elements, he said.

"Students from Dhaka University were part of the vanguard of the Mukti Bahini [freedom fighters]. Many of the university teachers provided valuable services to the provisional government established in Mujibnagar," he said.

Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, who taught in the English department of DU since 1948, was a pioneer in promoting intellectual debates on public issues, democracy and human rights, Dr Kamal added.

Murshid was the vice-chancellor of Rajshahi University from 1972 to 1974; Bangladesh's ambassador to Poland from 1975-1977 and an assistant secretary general of the Commonwealth from 1977 to 1982. He joined back DU in 1982 and retired in 1984.

Murshid, one of the writers of the historic Six Points of Awami League, had expressed concern that "politicisation" of students and teachers went against the aspirations of those who wanted Dhaka University to emerge as a centre of academic excellence.

Dr Kamal Hossain said it is very important to get Dhaka University free of sycophancy and partisan politics. "Let us bring back the glory of Dhaka University," he added.

Prof Tazeen Mahnaz Murshid, daughter of Khan Sarwar Murshid, said objectives of the trust fund are to focus on areas of interests of her parents including aesthetics, higher education, politics, governance, civil society, human rights and gender, literature and history.

ASB President Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury and Prof Dr Sabbir Ahmed also spoke.