

# Govt must ensure private university freedom doesn't create space for militancy: Education minister

Govt regulation should support universities rather than keep them under constant pressure, he says

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Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon today said private universities should be allowed to operate with freedom, but the government must ensure that such freedom does not create space for militancy.

Speaking at a views-exchange meeting, titled “Role of Private Universities in Higher Education, Future Direction and Joint Action Plan for Achieving National Goals”, organised by the Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh in Dhaka’s Banani, Milon said, “Let them have their own freedom. But such freedom must not lead to another Holey Artisan. So, we must address that.”



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He emphasised that government regulation should support universities rather than keep them under constant pressure, adding that decisions on higher education must be taken after discussions with stakeholders.

Referring to cross-border education, Milon said a file on a university and cross-border education came to the ministry soon after he took office. “All these were pushed earlier before becoming legally valid,” he said. He said he refused to sign the file before examining the matter.

He praised academics who returned from abroad to strengthen private universities.

The education minister mentioned that the idea of private universities was nurtured under former prime minister Khaleda Zia with the enacting of Private University Act of 1992. He said attempts were made in 2010 and again in 2025 to change or modify the private university sector and bring it under government administration.

He also questioned whether institutions were fulfilling obligations on scholarships and stipends. “It is a trust, non-profit. But a huge chunk of money is coming in. We do not know where this money goes.” Any future decision on whether private universities remain under the trust model or shift to company law would be taken after stakeholder consultations, he said.

The programme was attended by Prime Minister’s Education Adviser Mahadi Amin, UGC Chairman Prof Mamun Ahmed, members of boards of trustees, and vice chancellors of various private universities.