



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the founding anniversary and laying of foundation-stone of the new campus of the North-South University at Basundhara on Thursday.

## Stop consultancy, NGO work, Khaleda asks varsity teachers

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Thursday urged university teachers to more sincerely perform their duties eschewing from spending time on consulting and NGO works, reports UNB.

"A common allegation is heard against university teachers that they invest more time in consultancy, NGO work and other activities than taking class. Important educational institutions should not be deprived of honest advice of highly educated and experienced teachers," she told a foundation-laying ceremony of a private university.

"Teaching is your primary and pivotal responsibility," the Prime Minister reminded the teachers.

She called for initiatives to establish at least one world-class university in Bangladesh, as it has become imperative to create opportunities here for education of international standards.

"The opportunity for our students to go abroad for higher studies is shrinking. Students from different countries of this region will come here if international-standard universities can be set up," she told her audience of teachers, intellectuals and VCs of different universities.

Khaleda Zia unveiled the foundation-stone of a permanent campus of the North South University (NSU) at Basundhara beside the city of Basundhara, elite enclave, coinciding with the inauguration of

decade of the NSU launch. On February 10 in 1993, Khaleda Zia formally inaugurated the North South University, the first private university in the country, at Banani. It was first to get government approval in 1992 under the Private University Act 1992.

Some 37 private universities, 28 in Dhaka alone, are now running in the country. Some 30,000 to 35,000 students are studying in those private universities, lessening, to some extent, heavy pressures on public universities, the function was informed.

The NSU started off with 137 students and now the number stood at about 3,500. The varsity has so far produced 952 graduates. The new campus would spread over 5.5 acres of land with the capacity of accommodating 6,000 students in 24 departments.

Ministers, diplomats, entrepreneurs, elite, guardians and students, attended the foundation-laying ceremony.

Education Minister Dr Osman Farrouk, NSU Vice-Chancellor Dr Hafiz GA Siddiqi, Chairman of the Board of Governors of NSU ABM Kalamuddin Khan and founder-chairman of the BOG Iftekharul Alam also spoke at the function.

Addressing the function, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia listed her government's various pragmatic steps and policies for

education sector and said attitude of the present government towards the spread of higher studies is liberal.

"We want to open the door of higher studies for all, want to brace ourselves with preparation for facing the challenges of globalization and free market economy.

She requested the NSU authorities to see that meritorious students are not deprived of opportunity of higher studies for financial constraints.

"Commercialization of knowledge and education is never rational," she observed, indicating high costs of tutelage at private varsities.

Whole praising the performance of the North South University, Khaleda Zia assured her government would extend cooperation in getting land outside Dhaka if anyone interested to set up university maintaining proper environment came up as it is necessary to spread scope of higher education across the country.

Referring to her government's tough steps in rooting out anarchy and unfair means in examinations, the Prime Minister said her government would not compromise on the standard of education in order to survive international competition.