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DU CRISIS
BBC Sanglap
calls for talks
with teachers,
students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should resolve the Dhaka University crisis through discussions with teachers and students before the public universities and colleges reopen, participants at a BBC Sanglap said yesterday.

They warned that the situation might get more complicated otherwise.

The BNP chairperson's adviser Brig Gen (retd) ASM Hannan Shah, the Awami League central committee member Prof Abu Sayeed, former adviser to the caretaker government Sultana Kamal and former Dhaka University vice chancellor Prof Moniruzzaman Miah spoke at the dialogue held at Bangladesh-China Friendship

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BBC Sanglap

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Conference Centre in the capital.

The panellists viewed that Dhaka University Teachers' Association General Secretary Prof Anwar Hossain's statement seeking apology to the army was unusual.

"Not a single people in the country will believe that the Dhaka University professor has willingly sought apology," said Hannan Shah, adding that the way teachers and students at the DU were harassed might invite sharp reaction when the university reopens.

He said it was the first time in the country's history that a university professor sought apology to the army.

Sultana Kamal said if the crisis is not resolved right now through discussion, the government cannot blame anyone for the looming sharp reactions.

Prof Moniruzzaman Miah agreed that teachers and students have to be appeased through dialogue.

Contradicting Law Adviser Mainul Hossain, the discussants said the present government is a caretaker one, not a national government. They said the government must not style itself a national government as the constitution does not provide for any such concept.

Hannan said the law adviser might not clearly understand the differences between national and caretaker governments, while Prof Sayeed said, "to uphold our national constitution, we must address this government as caretaker one."

Replying to a question, they also suggested that the government take strict measures to ensure that journalists are not harassed any more while on duty during emergency or crisis times.

The discussants also termed the government's decision of reopening the private university at the time when the public universities have been closed as discriminatory.

Sultana Kamal questioned the formation of this second caretaker government, saying "There is no provision in the constitution for two caretaker governments in a row".

Hannan Shah recommended the government to seek guidance from the Supreme Court as it has passed the stipulated 90 days.

Prof Abu Sayeed, however, mentioned the doctrine of necessity and said the next parliament will have to ratify the government.

Echoing Sayeed, Prof Miah said they will have to accept the activities of the present government, otherwise another problem might pop up.

The BBC Bangla Service in association with the BBC World Service Trust organised the event which was moderated by Kamal Ahmed.