

No place here for extremism

President tells students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has no place for bigotry and militancy and people here have always been non-communal and respectful to other religions, President Abdul Hamid said yesterday.

Universities should play a pivotal role in promoting the decades-old tradition of communal harmony, he said while addressing the 10th convocation of Brac University at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

His remarks came against the backdrop of the killing of secular bloggers this year and the recent murder of publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan.

Presiding over the convocation ceremony, Abdul Hamid, chancellor of the university, called upon the country's universities to instil patriotism in students.

The educational institutions must ensure standards of



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education, uphold the spirit of the Liberation War, expand the field of research and produce students who can compete internationally, he added.

Universities have responsibilities towards common people as well.

Some private universities have recently drawn criticism, he said, adding, "We have to keep in mind that educational institutions should never turn themselves into profit-making business entities. That is not expected."

Instead, these institutions should be centres of knowledge, Hamid said.

Nine-hundred and fifty-nine students were awarded degrees at the convocation. Of them, Mashiat Nawar Chowdhury and Faisal Bin Rashed were given gold medals for outstanding academic achievements.

Congratulating the graduates, the president urged them to apply their knowledge, talents and creativity towards greater welfare of the nation.

He underscored the need for increasing facilities in the country's private universities so that students belonging to poor families can take admission there.

Greeting the graduates, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed KCMG, chairperson of the Board of Trustees of Brac University, said a new horizon had opened up before students. He asked them to leave a mark of highest efficiency in whatever profession they choose.

Delivering a convocation speech, Matiur Rahman, editor and publisher of Bangla daily Prothom Alo, advised the graduates to take inspiration from whatever good and creative in the world and from life.

Vice-Chancellor of Brac University Prof Syed Saad Andaleeb also spoke at the ceremony.