

NOV. 19 2001

THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER

তারিখ	.....
পৃষ্ঠা	.....
কলাম	.....

## Stunning Suspension

Bangladesh Nationalist Party Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has stunned everyone, not least her student fronts, by suspending the Chhatra Dal Central Committee. It is a welcome move though fraught with trouble. Although no reasons have been cited immediately, the announcement Sunday evening is widely seen to be the result of the recent spurt of embarrassing delinquency demonstrated by the rank and file of the student fronts.

Ever since the landslide victory of the BNP-led four-party alliance, various groups, under the ruling party banner, have been out capturing hostels, halls, buses and launch terminals and what not, wielding arms and swaggering about, drunk with a 'It's-our-turn-now' kind of attitude, vis-a-vis the Awami League-supported fronts. What is worse, the grabbing spree is generating bad blood not only between the Chhatra Dal and the Awami League student wings but also among rival groups within same party badge-holders.

The BNP student front is, reportedly, splintered into three groups of equally aggressive rent-seekers (what else are they) and violent interaction among them is causing the newly installed government a great deal of headache. This surprise move is likely to be followed by a change in student leadership. But a more drastic attitudinal change was noticeable early on. The BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan last Friday did not mince words when he addressed student leaders in their central committee office. He advised the 'employable' leaders to look for jobs and others (above the age-bar) to go for business.

In other words, the message is, they should stop leaning on the BNP for their upkeep! These are brave words indeed, but in the current political culture would the elder's advice be honoured? Student politics vis-a-vis the mother parties have become so sullied by years of irrational patronage that overhauling the system would require no less than a national movement in which all the political parties in the country would have to be involved. Unless godfathers (and godmothers) of all parties cease to mislead impressionable youth with 'carrots', and misguide them into becoming monsters by and by, we cannot hope to 'clean' student politics and restore the idealism of youth and the academic environment in our educational institutions.