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Political consensus needed to curb campus terrorism

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury Tuesday made a passionate appeal to all to play their due role in the elimination of terrorist not only from the Campus but also from national life rising above narrow party consideration and discarding hatred, rancour and retaliation, reports BSS.

Making a statement in the Jatiya Sangsad on the violence that took place in the Dhaka University campus on October 27, the Home Minister expressed his concern over terrorism in the Campus and said the nation today had entered a critical phase due to this scourge. This in turn, has posed a serious threat to democratic social system, he said adding "we can't allow anybody to frustrate the hard earned gains achieved after nine years of struggle against autocracy".

Terming terrorism on the campus as a political problem, Mr. Chowdhury said proper solution to this problem could not be achieved only through administrative activities. Consolidated and well planned political consensus are needed to curb terrorism, he stressed.

(See Page 10 Col. 4)

Welcoming the constitution of a parliamentary committee on terrorism on the campus, he assured all possible cooperation and support on behalf of his ministry to all activities of the committee. He expressed the hope that the committee would be able to give a proper political guideline in the solution of this serious problem through overall discussions.

Mr. Abdul Matin Chowdhury told the House that immediately after assuming the responsibility of the Home Ministry only a few days ago he had reviewed the overall law and order situation in the country as well as the campus. The nature of terrorist activities and their main causes also came under review, he said.

Referring to the acts of violence at Narail, Sirajgonj, Rangpur Medical College, Chittagong B.I.T. Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and last at the Dhaka University, the Home Minister said after analysis of these incidents it appeared to him that a student wing of a political organisation was disrupting the whole education system by spreading terrorist activities de-

Political consensus

(From Page 1 Col.7)

liberately and in a very planned way. Consequently, other student organisations were naturally being compelled to get involved in these activities, he said.

Mr. Chowdhury said after taking up the responsibility of the Home Ministry he held meetings with the leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, various political parties, representatives of teachers and students organisations and discussed the issue of violence on the campus. He did this as a reflection of the sincere goodwill of the government and in continuation of the policy being pursued by the Prime Minister.

He further said he held discussions with Awami League, Jamaat-e-Islami, Five-Party Alliance leaders Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Huq Inu, Nirmal Sen, Tipu Biswas, Bimal Biswas, Abdullah Sarkar, Moinuddin Khan Badal and Naim Jahangir, Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University and Syndicate members, Vice-Chancellor of the Engineering University and its teachers and with others. During the discussions all quarters showed eagerness to eliminate violence from the campus. But unfortunately it was true that the situation was deteriorating instead of improving, he said.

The Home Minister said violence on the campus all over the country and also the Dhaka University was a serious national problem. For this the educational atmosphere was being disturbed seriously. Consequently, date of examinations was being shifted time and again leading to session jam. It had now become difficult on the part of any student to complete his education in due course, he said.

He described how violence on the campus had been hampering economic progress and creating impediments in the field of development of human resources. We all would be responsible to the next generation if such a trend be continued, he said.

Turning to the unfortunate incident at the Dhaka University on October 27, he said at 12.50 p.m. on that day a band of armed students of Chhatra League, their outside associates and the persons accused in the killing of Dr. Milon equipped with lethal weapons suddenly attacked the DUCSU building and started firing unremittingly. The use of the words "Chhatra League" by the Home Minister raised a storm of protest from the Awami League members in the House. Many of them stood up at

a time and started shouting at the top of their voice. The Speaker repeatedly pleaded with them to have patience and allow the Home Minister to continue his speech.

Amid shouts of the Awami League MPs the Home Minister continued reading his prepared statement.

The Home Minister told the House that at that time Khairul Kabir Khokan, DUSCU General Secretary and other DUCSU leaders were present in the DUCSU building. As a result of this attack Mirza Galibur Rahman and A.T.M. Jafarullah Liton, two Chhatra Dal workers, were killed. Later an unidentified boy died in the hospital, he said.

Afterwards, he said, curfew was clamped on the campus area. Search was carried out by police, ansars and BDR in each hall. The search resulted in the recovery of four rounds of bullets, four pipe guns and parts of SLR, he added.

He further said some adverse comments were made in the House regarding a Press Note that was issued on the incident on the campus. He informed the House there was no specific mention of the warring parties in the Press Note which was issued on the basis of information received immediately. On the receipt of correct information afterwards it was clearly known that the situation in the Dhaka University had erupted following a joint raid launched by a band of armed students of Chhatra League, their associates, accused persons in the killing of Dr. Milon and outside miscreants. The second Press Note was issued to remove all confusion in this respect and enlighten the correct information to the whole nation, he added.

He said the present government believed in the full freedom of the Press and the national newspapers were able to publish news without any hindrance. The veracity of the Press Note was proved in the reports of almost every newspaper that came out on October 28, he said.

Mr. Abdul Matin Chowdhury strongly contradicted the contention of Awami League leader Mr. Tofael Ahmed that stones were hurled on the car of the Prime Minister when she went to see the bodies of the two Chhatra Dal workers at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital Monday.

Referring to the body of the street boy, he said efforts were now on to find out the parents of the boy. The government would take steps for his burial if his parents or relatives were not found, he assured.