

Will BNP

Ban on student politics Will BNP turn back?

Varsity Correspondent

In the aftermath of the common students' massive eruption on the Dhaka University campus, the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has turned back from its previous stand of banning student politics, party sources said.

The commoners' upsurge for-

mented the government last whole week and it failed to make any headway to diffuse the students' agitation that led the university's Vice Chancellor and Proctor bowing out of their offices.

The party high-ups now are re-
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alising that the unprecedented student-outburst could be contained had the ruling party's student front been functioning.

The BNP high command is now planning to revive or reshuffle the suspended central committee of its student wing considering any possible political encounter with the "hostile opposition", insiders said.

In such cases, Jatiyatabdai Chhatra Dal (JCD) would play as a deterrent force against the opponents who have student organisations to throw formidable challenge on the campus, the senior BNP leaders observe.

Against these consequences, the ruling party's student affairs secretary and State Minister for Health Amanullah Aman, at an emergency meeting of JCD on Friday, pronounced that a new central committee would be formed very soon.

Sympathising with the JCD leaders and activists frustrated due to long suspension of its central committee, Aman said, "everything would be alright and Chhatra Dal would march on its own course."

The catalyst student leader of the mass-students upsurge against military ruler Gen Ershad in 1990, asked the JCD leaders to form a strict chain of command to reinforce the activities of the slowed down student organisation.

The Minister also reviewed the campus situation and the JCD's role in the incidents, JCD leaders present at the meeting said.

The outcome of Friday's emergency meeting restored confidence in the JCD activists and leaders. Coming out of the hour-long meeting where Aman addressed for 25 minutes, most of the leaders went to Madhu's Canteen and burst into cheers.

The JCD leaders are now hoping for formation of its central committee in the shortest time as the main opposition Awami League already called a oust-government movement.

"Had the BNP high command, specially the Prime Minister, gone ahead with the plan to impose moratorium on student politics by dismantling its own front organisation, it would be suicidal decision and the recent incidents proved the necessity of a strong student wing," said a leader of now-suspended JCD central committee.

Reflecting the views of a number of top leaders of BNP in the Cabinet, the JCD leader said those, who have no role in student politics and possess "military mindset", were more interested in injecting the idea of banning student politics.

Although, Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia had her different meaning and justification for such a move, following different terrorist incidents including the BUET trag-

edy, she announced that if needed, the government would ban student politics by enacting laws in order to completely free the campus from the curse of terrorism.

The Premier's statement evoked more criticism than welcome gesture from different political quarters including her party. BNP's coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami rather gave a nod to the Premier's overtures, despite all the doubts about its cadre-based student front - Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Following Friday's statement of BNP's Student Affairs Secretary, a good number of JCD leaders were encouraged and started hectic lobbying to make room in the future committee of the ruling party's influential student wing.

The formation of the JCD central committee is likely to be made sometime in next month, as it will take a time to finalise the committee from among the potential candidates.

Azizul Bari Helal, Monir Hossain, Shahabuddin Laltu, ABM Mosharraf Hossain, Shafiu Bari Babu, Selimuzzaman Selim and Mustafizul Islam Mamun are the main contenders for the top leadership of the JCD.

Nurul Islam Nayan, Asaduzzaman Asad, Haider Ali Lew, Golam Hafiz Nahin and Syed Islam Firoj are contenders for Dhaka University Committee