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Only banning student politics is not the solution

Buet ban should be part of a wider institutional reform





Valueimpression

The ban on the activities of student-led political organisations on Buet campus, administration on Friday, should be seen as a first step toward the wider intention to make the campus safe for students. The ban, which came in response to demands raised by Abrar Fahad, was not an organic development born of a politico-academic

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before the directive is fleshed out to give a more comprehensive guideline. But the novelty of the decision and its far-reaching potential should be acknowledged. Other public universities should take note, and actively try to find a solution of their own.

It's important to note that this ban doesn't include the students' right to freedom of association or to express their political opinion. It targets the particular brand of student politics that has developed in the country in which the student wings of political parties, especially the ruling party, often use their power to terrorise general students. But only a ban on paper will not work without the sincerity of the government and the university administrations which have the responsibility to create a safe, congenial atmosphere for the students. This is what the authorities in Buet, as in other universities, have so far failed to do. For too long they have abdicated their responsibility to ensure that students are protected from the fallout of their dissent and independent thought, and that they don't suffer at the hands of goons masquerading as students. The ruling party is particularly to blame for the deteriorating condition in the universities and for its failure to check abuse of power by the unruly members of its student wing. Without addressing these issues, a ban on partisan student politics will not be effective. Also, it's important that university administrations are rid of political influences and allowed to function properly to ensure the welfare of the students. Public universities have for decades been plagued by the scourge of student politics and too many precious lives have been lost or scarred. The Abrar incident should serve as a lesson that it's time we broke free of this regressive culture and launched initiatives for a wider institutional reform in the universities, whatever it entails.

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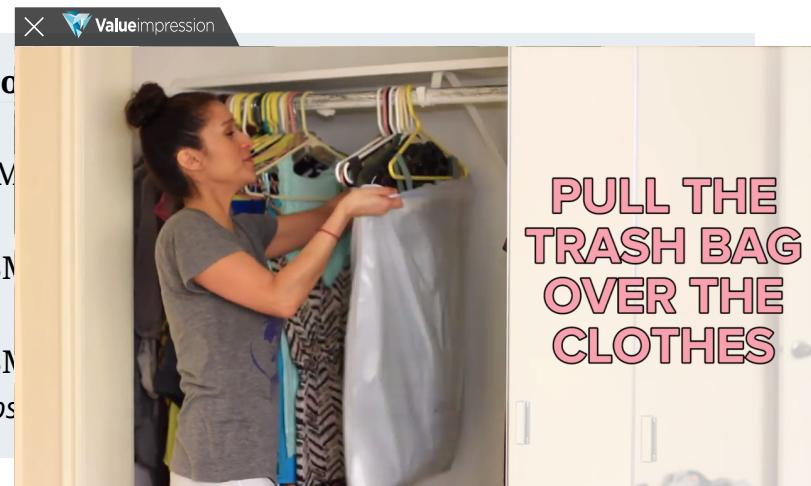
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