

## Education: Victim of politics

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**E**DUCATION is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" -- Nelson Mandela. Certainly, it is the basic pillar which helps a nation to flourish. Unfortunately, political instability has shut down educational institutions and shaken the whole nation. In the long run, we are the victims and the nation is the sufferer.

It is surprising that the government is failing to ensure proper security to the students whereas our constitution gives such a right to all (Article 32). In spite of this, many schools are continuing their classes and academic activities during strike and blockade. Therefore, students are forced to go to school to attend classes and sit for their exams by taking risks. As a consequence, students are attacked and sometimes even killed by political activists. In Lalmonirhat, twenty students and two female teachers along with the headmaster of the school were beaten up by the political cadres for keeping the school open during a hartal in March 2013 (New Age, March 29, 2013). In such circumstances, it is not surprising that an increasing number of students are losing interest and courage to go to school, which is creating pressure on them.

Significantly, many colleges and universities remain closed for a long time. A few private universities have cancelled their semester while some have extended the duration of the semester. This situation will ultimately affect the practical life of the students as they cannot expand their skills and efficiency level. This will thus affect the development process of the country.

Political instability and violent protests are increasing day by day. A UNDP report published in 2005 showed that both major political parties have been equally active in using violence as a means of political protest. Consequently, pass rate of this year has gone down from 76.5% (2012) to 71.3%, whereas the combined pass rate also fell by 4.37 percentage points.

The political parties must sit for dialogue to come up with a consensus among all, and they should make a long-term strategic commitment to change the political situation. Political parties must always remember that "education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army" (Edward Everett).

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