

BCL at it again

THE shameful attack by activists of the Chhatra League, the student organisation of the ruling Awami League, on a group of teachers at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology on Sunday is deplorable. According to a report that New Age published on Monday, when the teachers were gathering at the entrance to the university's vice-chancellor's office about 8:00am as part of their sit-in that was announced earlier, the Chhatra League activists attacked them in which at least 10 were injured. Moreover, the activists, in addition to snatching the banner of the protesting teachers, assaulted them even after they fell down on the ground. The Chhatra League activists were reportedly 'enticed' by the vice-chancellor to drive away the teachers, who were obstructing his way to office. It is pertinent to recall here that a section of pro-Awami League teachers have for the past few months been demanding the resignation of the vice-chancellor levelling against him allegations of corruptions, irregularities, nepotism and misbehaviour with fellow teachers while another section of teachers, also loyal to the ruling party, are supportive of the vice-chancellor. Unfortunately, conflicts between groups of pro-ruling party teachers in different public universities over the control of the administration, in particular, which have been hampering academic activities, sometimes even for months, have become a rising trend ever since the incumbents assumed office in 2009.

In any case, the attack on the teachers is a culpable offence. The government, the university administration and the student organisation's top brass immediately need to take punitive actions against the perpetrators. All of them need to realise that any failure in this regard would not only indulge in the recurrence of similar unwarranted incidents but also severely affect teacher-student relationship which is of utmost importance for congenial academic atmosphere in any educational institutions. Of course, this is not the first time that Chhatra League activists attacked or assaulted teachers. Earlier, teachers in the Islamic University in Kushtia faced a similar situation when they were protesting against the vice-chancellor accused of similar charges. Regrettably, however, the attacks have remained unaddressed till date. Not only that, leaders and activists of the same organisation have so far engaged themselves in various crimes such as extortion, abduction, rent seeking, admission trade and even sexual harassment of girls in and outside different campuses. But other than issuing some tough words against them apparently just to pacify public outrage against the misdeeds, key functionaries of the government, especially those who were to take care of the organisation, have hardly taken any serious action against troublemakers in the organisation. In this context, there is, indeed, little hope for any serious action, organisational or administrative, to be taken against the attackers in question.

Yet, conscious sections of society, in general, and noted personalities, in particular, need to come up with a sustained voice against the heinous incident. It is all the more important because, as experiences say, only efforts could mount pressure on the government to come out of its inaction about such issues.