

## Assault of JU teacher by student activist

*Culture of impunity fuels such behaviour*

**W**E are outraged that a teacher was allegedly sexually assaulted on a campus by a student, that too, by an activist of a ruling party student wing. We note with concern that the said activist from Jagannath University has been released from custody, only hours after he was given over to the police by the university authorities. What is even more troubling is that the police are now denying that the authorities handed him over to them in the first place.

According to reports, there were witness accounts and photographs to show that the police left the campus with the culprit in their vehicle; in addition, the victim and her colleagues were present at the proctor's office when the accused was handed over. Under the circumstances, the Kotwali police station Sub-Inspector's denial makes us wonder about the extent to which our law enforcers are willing to go to protect errant ruling party student activists at the cost of justice.

We cannot condone acts of violence and intolerance targeted towards teachers of our esteemed public institutions; we have to ensure that the strongest institutional and legal measures are taken to punish the perpetrators and deter others from carrying out similar acts in the future, irrespective of their political affiliation. Unfortunately, the impunity enjoyed by certain student group members enables and encourages them to act in such a deplorable manner in campuses.

Law enforcers must be held accountable for their role in nurturing this culture of impunity; they must not forget that their duty is to protect the citizens of this country, not the members of any particular student wing.