

# The dark side of student politics

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**MD. ASADULLAH KHAN** ...ion money caused loss of lives and prop-  
erty and tarnished the image of the gov-  
ernment. Having failed to rein in the  
criminal elements in her own party wing,  
the PM has given up her role as patron of  
the BCL.

While we condole the tragic death of Rajib and sympathise with the bereaved family, we can only ponder over the consequences of the unbridled rise of gangsterism in the campuses as a result of the indifference of the administration and the patronage of the political godfathers. The irony of the whole situation is that we have clowns masquerading as leaders.

Let us not forget how quickly yesterday's mastans and some fake student

leaders have become today's political leaders. Declaring a ban on student politics has been a battle cry since long. The government's assurances raised hopes that there was a different kind of leadership ready to take on the terrorists and crackdown on the trouble mongers wherever they might be. But the law enforcers have yet to come up with a plan that can appease public outrage.

The people are demanding that those at the helm of affairs put their words to action. After Rajib's killing, the tormented family as well as the nation waited for days to see the killers arrested. The administration's responsibility is not merely to dispense justice but also to dispense it swiftly.

The situation has come to such a pass that if the PM does not quickly get back to governing the country we could find ourselves ruled by thugs instead of a democratically elected government.

The first 100 days are very crucial for any government. Backed by some tainted party leaders from both wings, a group of criminals and armed cadres in the student wings of the parties now ravage the peaceful atmosphere of the campuses.

Ironically, they operate in such a funny circle that those who had affiliations with the ICS or JCD belong to BCL today. They just change their colours at their convenience.

With violence surging, extortion unabated, and the economy in bad shape because of the worldwide recession, the administration cannot play second fiddle. Is it that the massive election victory has caused the leadership quality and political bondage to atrophy instead of radiating the 'guiding' spirit that people demanded and craved for so much?

The student wing, far from being an asset, is destroying the party image, and the prime minister can restore the party's sullied image. As death stalks every innocent citizen, whose only craving is the development of the country, such killings challenge the ruling party with a moment of reckoning.

In the worst of times, draconian laws are framed. But when it comes to implementation, precious little is done. Since this government came to power, people saw in stunned disbelief the most audacious acts of terrorism. The police in most cases stayed away from the scene. In

Jahangirnagar University, six students were expelled for six months only after about one month of their involvement in violence.

Despite the PM's stern warning, violence in the campuses continues, and some criminal gangs masquerading as students are operating with greater ferocity and vengeance. Jagannath University campus was again rocked by factional feud in the BCL, leaving 25, including the assistant proctor, injured. It has been learnt that some ex-BCL leaders, who were barred from continuing their activities, are pulling the strings from behind.

Reports have it that police played the role of silent spectators, though they were present in the campus. Is it that the high officials are incapable of taking actions against those involved in clashes and against the law enforcers who are so openly insubordinate? The PM must have noticed that there is a general disenchantment with the government's inability to do anything that goes beyond the motions of governance.

Student organisations are extensive of the political parties, and are busy collecting money from any source possible instead of concentrating on issues related to student welfare. Using the signboards of different parties, the armed hooligans have sown the seeds of a new brand of politics that uses terror and corruption to consolidate power. Without exception, colleges and universities have turned into dens of criminality. Student politics these days is getting involved in tighter manipulative admission trade, toll collection, gutting and killing another. Tagar Muki, who allegedly killed Sony, a brilliant student of BUET in 2002, were the products of such tainted politics back by influential godfathers belonging to the ruling party. All the political parties must think seriously about de-linking the student wing of their parties in the hope that the wounds will begin to heal.

MD. ASADULLAH KHAN is a former teacher of physics at the Institute of Examinations, BUET.  
E-mail: aulhambd@gmail.com

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