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DU VC, Teacher Under Attack, Stop Patronising Goons

Dhaka University has not seen any bloody clashes in recent times. But it does not mean it is all quiet on the DU front. When bombs are planted around the Vice-Chancellor's residence and trigger-happy goons open fire on the residence of a DU teacher, we all have every reason to be alarmed. This is perhaps for the first time that the DU VC's residence has faced bomb scare—not just once but twice in a month. And the teacher whose residence has come under fire was earlier threatened with the worst possible consequences for his alleged remark against the country's prime minister.

Clearly, the second incident is not without political overtones. Even the motive of the attackers is quite clear. But what about the planting of bombs right inside the compound of the VC's residence? Last month two bombs exploded in front of the VC's house and several bombs were recovered from the residence of DU treasurer only a few days ago. This time however an unknown caller alerted the VC about the bombs and the police retrieved all six bombs.

This certainly is a dangerous development. If the top executive of the country's premier highest seat of learning and its teachers become target of assailants, one must admit that something has gone terribly wrong with our education system. Whose wrath, the teachers of a university may have drawn? We do not think the common thugs who murder for money will dare commit themselves to such a dare-devilry act. Most likely the perpetrators are insiders who have political agendas counter to the ones the VC or the teachers concerned would like to carry forward. Dhaka University is not what it used to be once.

Today political allegiance plays a major role in matters of DU administration for students and appointment of teachers. What a pity the most eligible fails to qualify because narrow and nasty politics has opted for a less qualified candidate. We won't be surprised if the undesirable and ugly developments are just a fall-out of parochial political considerations. Where pursuance of knowledge was the main objective and quality mattered, most exercises have now fallen in disrepute. Where brain power is neglected in preference for brawn, attempt on life or physical annihilation is what is naturally to be the course of action. The DU is reaping what it sowed.

We therefore strongly suggest that a high-powered committee be constituted to investigate into the two incidents and nab the culprits. At the same time, the university administration must strive to come out of the narrow politics that has given it a bad name. The authorities must learn to say to the political leadership 'thus far and no further'. If politics keeps its ugly hands off, the university will be able to play its due role.