

Campus death

Exemplary punishment needed for the culprits

THE death of a student leader belonging to the Chattra Moitree of Rajshai Polytechnic Institute (RPI) due to violence is most unfortunate and regrettable. The fact that the perpetrators belonged to the Chattra League must be a cause of severe embarrassment to the ruling Awami League. The matter assumes even more poignancy when it turns out that the deceased belonged to the student wing of one of the AL's coalition partners.

It seemed for a while that the spate of campus violence, perpetrated by the BCL immediately after the assumption of office by the AL, had subsided. But we were wrong. We feel that the AL high command is yet to get full control of its student wing; evidently not enough has been done to make it entirely malleable to party fiats despite the PM's clear directives. And it seems, too, that there is no one to take effective charge of the CL.

It is quite natural that there would be a period, at the initial stage when a party assumes the reins of power, when the focus is entirely on running the government, with the top party leadership engaged in managing the affairs of the state, thereby causing loss of grip on the party grassroots. But for a party like the AL, that should not be grounds for lax internal party control that creates indiscipline and causes not only embarrassment to the party but may even be the cause of decline of people's confidence in the party itself.

Predictably, the post-incident action of the party will be restricted to restating its position that no one would be allowed to vitiate the atmosphere in the educational institutions and that stringent measures would be taken against the culprits, with little substantive action. Such a state should not be tolerated by the party; it certainly will not be tolerated by the people.

We suggest that the government address the matter of ill discipline of its affiliates seriously, particularly of its student wing. A strong message must be sent to the cadres that consequences of such behaviour will be unforgiving.

We understand that several Chattra League members of the RPI have been arrested and some have been expelled from the party. We want exemplary punishment for the culprits, which should not only be quick but should also be seen to have been delivered. No one with such violent disposition deserves to be called a student or has the freedom to roam the premises of educational institutions. Authorities of these institutions must play their part to stop campus violence. Understandably, some are hesitant to act against government party affiliates. For the sake of peaceful academic atmosphere they must take stern action against the offenders irrespective of party connection, and which the government must back up fully.

We also feel that the party leadership should rethink the management of its affiliates and how to strengthen the mechanism of internal party control. More must be done to inculcate a new ethos in the party cadres that helps materialise the much vaunted politics of change.