

## BCL atrocities continue

THE Bangladesh Chhatra League, the student wing of the ruling Awami League, continues to hog the headlines for wrong reasons. Just the other day, an undergraduate student of Jahangirnagar University was tortured to death by some members of the university unit of the Chhatra League. BCL activists also prompted the indefinite closure of the Khulna University of Engineering and Technology by unleashing attacks on general students, who were protesting against the poor quality of food at the halls of residence. On Tuesday, according to a report front-paged in New Age on Wednesday, rival factions of the Chhatra League engaged in pitched battle hurling stones at each other forcing traffic on nearby roads to halt until the police separated them. The photograph accompanying the report showed several BCL activists, equipped with sharp weapons, chasing their rivals on the university campus.

Factional clash in the Chhatra League is nothing new. Ever since the Awami League-Jatiya Party government took office in 2009, it has taken place at regular intervals. Of course, at the beginning, the BCL activists attacked their political opponents, especially the leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the student front of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, in different educational institutions across the country. Needless to say, all these attacks were aimed at establishing control over the campuses. Once the goal was accomplished, however, they engaged in internecine conflicts.

Pertinently, over the last three years or so, BCL leaders and activists have perpetrated a series of criminal acts, including tender manipulation, admission trade, rent seeking, etc. On the other hand, the key figures of the government and the ruling party, including the prime minister, have vowed to take tough actions against them on a number of occasions which, regrettably, have so far hardly been translated into reality. What's more, apparently thanks to such inability, if not unwillingness, of the government, the BCL troublemakers have indulged in more heinous acts like rape. Just the other day, none but the president and secretary of the organisation's Satkhira unit allegedly raped a college girl in the district.

The government needs to realise that BCL atrocities not only tarnish its image and undermines its authority but also jeopardise the academic atmosphere and thus risk the academic life of thousands of students. If it continues to fail to rein in those, it would be bound to pay the price dearly.