

BCL blamed for ruining campus atmosphere

Moloy Saha and Iqbal Mahmud | Updated at 11:28pm on October 07, 2022



This file photo shows that Bangladesh Chhatra League activists attack Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists on the Dhaka University campus on September 28, 2022. — New Age photo

Academics and former student leaders have blamed the ruling Awami League's student organisation Bangladesh Chhatra League for recent violence on various campuses, observing that the student body has derailed from their ideals and objectives.

BCL has now become a major cause for concern in maintaining a congenial academic atmosphere in higher educational institutions across the country as it has been plagued by factional violence, on the one hand, and bent on driving other student organisations out of campuses through attacks and intimidation, on the other, they observed.

BCL has also been used as a lash by the ruling Awami League, which employs it to defend the wrongdoings of leaders of the incumbent government and the party, further observed the academics and former student leaders.

Interneecine feuds and clashes within BCL units allegedly over extortions, 'hall seat business' and other immoral gains as well as suppression of and attacks on oppositional student bodies by the organisation to establish an absolute control over campuses have ruined the country's academic atmosphere, they also observed.

Student politics of the country in the process has also lost its past glory and has become a tool of political parties to serve their ill purposes, they further viewed.

The recent violent and immoral activities of Chharta League at Dhaka University, Eden Mohila College, Comilla University and Chattogram University, they went on to say, have not only tarnished the good reputation of student politics but also blackened the country's image.

Politicians, academics and other observers suggested that student politics should be freed from the control of political parties and they should work for the rights and welfare of the students.

President of the Workers Party of Bangladesh and a former vice-president of the Dhaka University Central Students' Union, widely known as DUCSU, Rashed Khan Menon said, 'Now the ruling party has turned their student organisation into a tool of their party politics, which is controlled by party leaders.'

As a result, Menon said, BCL leaders and members have got involved in various immoral activities to make money and gain other benefits while they have, meanwhile, gone far away from the objective of fulfilling their roles and duties towards the welfare of students.

For reviving the past glory of student politics, he argued, student organisations should completely get out of the control of political parties.

Another former DUCSU VP and president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal-JSD ASM Abdur Rob said that the student wing of the ruling Awami League had deviated from the ideal role of a student organisation.

'Student organisations in the past always stood against any autocratic government, but now they [BCL] are working to protect an autocratic rule and carry out attacks on those students who oppose the autocracy,' Rob further said.

He called on the student bodies to play a major role in restoring democracy and a democratic administration in the country.

Former Dhaka University professor and currently a professor at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh Syed Manzoorul Islam said that the student organisation belonging to the political party in power now 'controlled' the educational institutions of the country.

Now that the Awami League has been in power for three consecutive terms their student organisation Chhatra League has become unruly, Manzoorul said.

'The country is engulfed in corruption and there is no rule of law,' he also observed while dwelling on BCL activities.

He, too, called on all the opposition parties to work for the restoration of democracy and a democratic rule in the country.

The activities and role of BCL have lately come under huge criticism as the organisation's leaders and activists got involved in factional clashes at different higher educational institutions and have been attacking opposition student organisations in recent months.

In a recent development, the Comilla University authorities were forced to announce the closure of residential halls and postpone all examinations from October 10 to October 17 following clashes between two BCL factions at the university.

Earlier, BCL forcibly blockaded the Chittagong University campus for at least three times in the past three months.

The latest CU blockade incident took place on September 19 by a faction of the university's BCL unit, in a demonstration of no-confidence in unit president Rezaul Hoque Rubel and general secretary Iqbal Hossain Tipu.

On September 25, at least 15 activists of the BCL Eden College unit were injured in a clash on the college campus after a faction of the college BCL unit came up with allegations against college unit president Tamanna Jasmine Riva and general secretary Razia Sultana.

Riva and Razia were allegedly involved in seat trading, extortion, torturing students and controlling college hostels and canteens.

On September 27 afternoon, at least 15 leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal were wounded in an attack on them by BCL leaders and activists on the Dhaka University campus when a delegation of the newly formed JCD DU committee was going to attend a pre-scheduled meeting with the university's vice-chancellor.

Abdur Rahman, a former BCL general secretary and now a presidium member of the ruling Awami League, said that what was now happening in some educational institutions of the country was a reflection of the degradation of society.

‘Without waging a “social movement”, it would not be possible to get rid of these problems,’ Abdur Rahman said.

He advised that some steps should be taken to improve the academic atmosphere on campuses.

According to former president of a Chhatra League faction Nazmul Haque Prodhan, the country’s politics is going through a critical phase as no democracy and democratic values exist in the country now.

‘When there is no democracy in the country, it [lack of democracy] also affects educational institutions which, too, see a decay of democratic practices,’ observed Nazmul, also the general secretary of Bangladesh Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal.

Another former BCL general secretary Nazrul Islam Babu said that a peaceful situation was now prevailing in the educational institutions of the country.

Nazrul Islam, an Awami League lawmaker, termed the recent incidents of BCL violence as isolated occurrences.

‘The government will take steps against those responsible,’ Nazrul said.

According to DU political science professor Shantanu Majumder, the universities of the country are not isolated entities and the national political situation is naturally reflected in the student politics of the country.



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