

BUET's Image

The high profile of the country's student community, particularly those of universities, has long taken a tumble. Amidst the general rot however, the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) had until recently maintained an enviable record. Academically it allowed hardly any thing to compromise its high standard. It is one that still enjoys international recognition, unlike that of education offered by other universities and medical colleges. This was possible because ugly student-teacher politics did not vitiate the academic atmosphere.

It will not be long before those days become history. Disconcerting developments indicate that this proud institution too is heading for a humiliating fate others have already embraced. Already BUET has made room for session jams which was once foreign to its character when other universities found themselves deep in this trouble. If BUET's ailment was only confined to this, possibly there was still hope for restoring its lost glory. What happened on BUET campus last week in fact exceeds most of the ugly incidents that have so far taken place on any university campus in the country. Nowhere have students turned on their teachers in such a premeditated manner and unleashed their wrath on university properties. Their indiscriminate attack on their teachers' quarters and deliberate destruction of costly computers and other university property bring to the fore a mental make-up that is deranged and debased, to say the least. They should not have been in the university in the first place.

And what an issue for them to raise their voice and resort to the heinous rowdyism as they have done. The violence directed towards the university authority was triggered by the expulsion of a student who was found guilty of impersonating a female student of his class. When he was supposed to be looked down as a villain, his peers managed to present him as a hero. Both value judgment and ethical consideration have been made a casualty. Thanks to our special brand of politics, we are compelled to accept black as white and the vice versa. Now this is an interesting development, one that represents Bangladesh on a mini scale. Means may be fair or foul, who cares? The important thing is to serve the end which is just self-interest. In this case the supporters of the guilty students went several steps ahead not necessarily because of their love for him. It is thought that they were looking for an excuse to have their term examination shifted from the schedule that has coincided with the World Cup cricket due to start from the middle of the month.

This is outrageous. Reportedly the rowdy students enjoyed the support from all the student fronts. Without their support they could not dare go so wild. Even more unfortunate is the report that a few teachers who wish to embarrass the VC incited the students to more violence. Personal likes and dislikes, ambition and petty interest prove too strong for institutional discipline, ethics and fair play. Bangladesh has paid a high price for weaknesses like these. BUET is not likely to be an exception. Yet we feel happy that the university authority did not budge an inch from its stand. The VC was intimidated and in tears when the illegal demands were placed before him. We stand by him. Now the choice is between evil and good. Here is one place that is small compared to the entire country but if it can weather this nasty storm, which some say, is politically motivated, it has everything to gain. One must remember that the general students are with the authority. At stake are the university's standard and international image. Let us do everything to preserve them.