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Opinion

The Campus And Politics Of Violence

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LOVE has an overpowering impact on human mind. It can transcend a youth from the quagmires of life and ennoble him to such actions as will make this planet a blessed and beautiful abode to live in. This is the edifying message imparted to its numerous viewers by the last weeks BTV play produced by Barkatullah.

It showed with salutary impact the invincible power of love on restless youth led astray by a selfish politician who tries to exploit him for his political aggrandisement. The engaging TV drama shows an exquisite university girl, Alo, blossoming forth with all the fragrance of love in the morbid mind of her class-fellow, Arun, who decides to renounce the politics of violence and surrender the unauthorised arms he possesses in the face of pressure and persuasion of his political mentor.

What Arun tells his mentor in response to his argument for the politics of terrorism constitutes quite a convincing message to all the youths struggling to find ways in the darkness of despair and disenchantment. He says, "We required arms to fight for the liberation of the country. But in sovereign Bangladesh we need no firearms to fight for the establishment of a democratic order.

For democracy we require support and strength of the people and not of arms".

But, unfortunately, contrary to this sublime message, our university campuses have of late been completely vitiated by an atmosphere of total insanity in which guns frequently roar out to impede acquisition of knowledge and prosecution of studies with undivided mind. It is an unmitigated tragedy. The running gun battles between two rival groups of students in Dhaka University a few days ago culminated in the dastardly killing of a student leader and indefinite closure of the university. A few months ago, Arif, another bright student, fell victim to a similar disgraceful incident. Other universities are also not free from such recurring tragedies.

Those who have been causing these blood-lettings with consequent closures of the universities are perhaps not as much important as why such reprehensible incidents are being allowed to pollute the academic atmosphere in our universities. Those who are enacting these painful dramas at periodic intervals in Dhaka and other universities of the country are not entirely unknown to the administration. Then what prevents the administration from

taking action against them in a manner so that they are crushed for all times to come and fail to raise their ugly heads over and over again? Parliament unanimously passed about three years ago a resolution demanding violence-free campuses, to back up any action that the administration may consider it necessary to take to crush the dangerous elements who are behind the tragedies in the universities. Despite all these back-up supports if the administration is unable to deal with them adequately, it would make a sad commentary on its efficiency and raise serious doubt in the minds of the peace-loving, law-abiding citizens about its ability to maintain law and order in the country.

The grim reality confronting us today is that despite all the platitudinous talks on the government's unflinching resolve to mop up all unauthorised arms and those who use them, the administration is yet to make a significant advance in this regard. Let it be noted, the government's responsibility does not with the suspension of its student front as the present government has done. As a matter of fact, the government cannot absolve itself of the responsibility of containing terrorist activities inside the university campuses by

only extricating itself of the student politics. Its sacred duty lies in maintaining law and order to help create academic atmosphere in the universities. The Administration can by no means play the role of a silent spectator to the brawl and battle between the rival groups of students, to the detriment of the academic interest of the vast majority of students.

The young boys who dabble in the armed conflicts inside the campuses by unleashing their destructive fury are puppets in the hands of those elements who remain behind the stage and pull strings from there to make them dance to their tune. Those dangerous elements must be stripped of their makes and exposed to the public, along with those who indulge in violence and killing in the campus.

However, the delinquent youths who do not indulge in crimes and killings should be dealt with compassion because they are much too young and immature to see the wood for the trees. If they are dealt with ruthlessly, the whole exercise may turn counter-productive. They may go astray and turn out to be hardened criminals if they are dealt with cruelty and harshness at this impressionable age of their life. Therefore the remedy lies in handling them with sympathy and understanding.