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Key to Campus Peace

President Shahabuddin has again spoken out. It's a national shame that he had to. What will it be if even after this he will need to blurt it out again?

It is not that the overall campus situation in the country hasn't changed since the President's last lambast. There is in most cases a lull but only outwardly. The cadres are intact with their caches of arms and well protected under the wing of the political parties. It is only a matter of any one of the big players BCL, JCD and ICS, coming to choose their moment — and there again will be fireworks. There is not one university or college level campus that is outside of this danger.

While the campuses savour a flitting reprieve, the gunman student or student-impostor does not really go on a vacation. Students are continuing to kill students outside the campus making a campus eruption inevitable and imminent. And there is another danger lurking behind this lull. National politics, student politics and students in armed preparedness with relations between these remaining the same as they were a year or two back — the lull is in fact time taken to prepare for big encounters by those that are for the time being not well-placed to hit and dictate.

What the nation is dying to see, in unison with President Shahabuddin, is the repudiation by the political parties of the nefarious practice of nurturing armed student cadres. We called upon BNP when it was in power for such renunciation. It didn't give an ear. We called upon AL when it came to power, but to no effect either. But it is our conviction, and we are not alone in this, that positive and effective change in the politics-induced national degeneration of youth, specially students and a corresponding collapse of national education can come only if the party in power, claiming always to be with the people, decides to repudiate armed student activism — *unilaterally*.

Just think of a government harbouring terrorists. It's no government there. We tend to believe Sheikh Hasina is sincere, and Rafiqul Islam too, when they say catch them even if they come from the ruling party's fold. But this is not enough. You must disown them. Why fear? Fear you what? That opponents will massacre your boys? Let them try and sign their own suicide note.

President Shahabuddin has called out to all to renunciate armed student cadres. Let all — AL, BNP, Jamaat and others — take note and act. And let AL as the ruling party not belie the trust the nation has been reposing on it. Only a total renunciation of armed student cadres is key to campus peace.