

The cost of being a political opponent

50 DMC students failed to take exams as JCD leaders ousted them from campus

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At least 50 medical students could not appear in their examinations, while many intern doctors failed to attend their classes at the Dhaka Medical College (DMC), after being ousted from the campus by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders.

The JCD took over the leadership of the DMC students union last year.

However, a number of students, who had 'negotiated' for the permission to enter the DMC campus and appear in the exams, said each of them had to pay an amount of

money, ranging from Tk 20,000 to Tk 50,000, before an unwritten agreement was reached, an allegation denied by the leaders of the just dismantled students union of the DMC.

According to sources, DMC students union (DMCSU) leaders, soon after taking office on November 14, 2001, following their victory in the controversial election, identified a number of rival Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leaders and threatened to physically abuse them if they continued to attend classes.

Bijoy Datta, an activist of the

DMC unit of BCL, was picked up on October 2 last year from the DMC campus and assaulted in front of hundreds of other fellow students for not following the 'order' of the union leaders. Bijoy could not appear in his final exams in January and May.

Similarly, a former general secretary of the DMC unit of BCL, Zahedur Rahman (Shawan) and activists of BCL, Swapan and Bipul were beaten up on the DMC campus in October last year by students belonging to the DMC unit of the JCD.

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Biddyan Barua, an intern doctor and a former VP of the DMC unit of the BCL, could not even enter the campus following the election of the DMC students union.

Rajibul Haq, then a student of the college, was badly beaten up on the campus, and ousted on November 24 last year.

BCL activists of the DMC Mahbub, Shamsul Arfin Jewel, former VP of DMCSU, Shahrier, Kamrul, Imroj, Tareq, Tuhin and Kazi Mollah Moni, a former GS of DMCSU, were prevented from entering the campus and thus they could not appear in their exams held in January and May. On an average, each student lost at least eight months, as they could not attend classes.

Similarly, Sohail, Hillool, Sumon, Sujon, Moinul, Salauddin, Shahin, Masum and Sudip, doing their one-year internship, were prevented from entering the adjacent hospital.

A number of 4th and 5th year students who had affiliation with the BCL, and had gone underground, have now joined classes following negotiations with the JCD, but they lost at least six to eight months.

"Initially I was so scared that I even did not wish to go for a dialogue with them. I heard that they were looking for a few of us and I learned that I was in the hit-list," said one victim.

"I have lost eight months as I

could not appear in exams last May. I had gone underground as my name was in their list of the wanted. Later negotiated through a senior Professor of the college to resume classes," said another student.

Dr Javed Ahmed was elected vice president of the DMCSU after the JCD won the students union election. BCL activists staying at the dormitory of Dr Fazle Rabbi Hall had to vacate their rooms following the JCD take over.

Sources also said that JCD cadres or outsiders, patronised by the union leaders, have taken possession of the rooms E-7 and 8, H-7 and 8, G-1 and D-1 of the hall. Several complaints were lodged with the authorities but nothing was done to evict them.

According to sources in the college, leaders and supporters of the JCD started invading rooms in the dormitory occupied by rival students, soon after the October 1 election in 2001. Many rooms were ransacked and some of the students had to vacate their rooms to avoid confrontation.

The next day (October 2), the JCD leaders warned common students not to side with the BCL.

When contacted, Dr Javed Ahmed said, "Only a few students, most of whom had committed crimes on the campus, have gone underground, but it is not true that general students suffered."

Dr Javed also brushed aside the allegation that students were sub-

jected to physical torture and that there were negotiations with the rivals. "We had no such orders to physically assault our rivals, and it is also baseless that we negotiated to allow general students to attend classes on payment of money," DMC Principal Professor Tofael Ahmed admitted that a few students suffered due to what he termed 'political unrest' on the campus.

"Some of the 'victims' had come to see me and expressed their grievances but I had nothing to do to help them," he said.

The academic council of the college was also silent. No action was taken against the union leaders who continued to threaten even the teachers who sided with the BCL.

When contacted the BCL Central Committee President Liaquat Sikdar said, "The careers of the students have been destroyed, and that is something unprecedented. We have received numerous complaints from our activists that they were not allowed to enter the campus because they supported the BCL. Even intern doctors were ousted from hospitals."

Liaquat also said, "Many of the students had to negotiate with the union leaders to appear in exams. It has happened for the first time in the history of the college. It is a disgrace to the nation and we demand re-election in all medical colleges and arrest of the culprits."