

Supporters ransack party office Cong forges poll alliance with AIADMK in Tamil Nadu

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: India's ruling Congress Party forged an election alliance with a big southern party which has flirted with the opposition for three years, party officials said today, reports Reuter.

The tie-up with the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), which governs Tamil Nadu state, was reached late on Wednesday after three days of drawn-out negotiations.

It was immediately scorned by the dominant Congress group in Tamil Nadu as unacceptable.

The Hindu newspaper called the latest tie-up "crass opportunism." The Pioneer said: "Nobody seriously expects this marriage to last very much beyond the nuptials."

Congress and AIADMK agreed that Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's ruling party would contest 29 of 39 parli-

mentary seats from Tamil Nadu, and the AIADMK the other 10, Congress spokesman Vithal Gadgil said.

The elections for a total of 543 seats in the Lok Sabha, or upper house, will be spread over five polling days beginning on April 27 and ending on May 30.

Congress said the regional pact with AIADMK, headed by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and former movie idol Jayalalitha Jayaram, was in the "larger interests of national politics."

The two parties linked hands between 1984 and 1991, when Congress took all 28 of the seats it contested in Tamil Nadu, but in 1993 they had a bad falling-out.

That year the AIADMK voted against Rao in a parliamentary no-confidence motion that failed. Thereafter they worked side-by-side with the opposition without ever striking a deal.

AFP adds: Hundreds of activists went on a rampage at the head office of India's ruling party here today to protest Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's election alliance with a Tamil party, witnesses said.

Angry supporters of Rao's Congress (I) Party destroyed wooden cut outs of the 74-year-old premier and burnt the sands of his campaign posters following the announcement of the poll pact.

Vowing to defy the party leadership, the Congress supporters shouted slogans against Rao as they hit his wooden cut-outs with shoes and slippers.

The rampage at the Congress office here was sparked by the announcement that the party would contest the upcoming general elections in the southern state of Tamil Nadu in alliance with the region's ruling AIADMK Party.



Palestinian women protest on Wednesday in the West Bank town of Ramallah with more than 200 supporters of the radical Islamic movement Hamas. The protesters demand the release of Hamas militants arrested by the Palestinian Authority since a wave of suicide bombing in Israel. — AFP/UNB photo

Withdrawal from Hebron postponed Israeli forces arrest 260 Palestinian students

RAMALLAH, West Bank, Mar 28: Israeli forces arrested 260 Palestinian students early today in the biggest security operation on the West Bank since the extension of Palestinian autonomy in the region last year, officials said, reports AFP.

Most of those rounded up in the pre-dawn raids were students from the Gaza Strip studying at West Bank universities and who had ignored orders by the Israeli authorities to return home after the recent series of suicide bombings in Israel, Deputy Defence Minister Ori Orr said on Israeli radio.

Units of paratroopers and border guards and agents from the Shin Beth security service were continuing early Thursday to search houses and other buildings in villages around Bir Zeit University north of here.

It was the latest and biggest in a vast series of sweeps against the Islamic resistance movement Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad Group, fundamentalist movements violently opposed to the Israel-PLO self-rule agreements.

Meanwhile, Israel postponed its planned partial withdrawal from Hebron today, falling to meet a midnight deadline to hand over most of the flashpoint West Bank city to Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

"For the time being, this redeployment has been postponed and no new date has been set," Foreign Minister Ehud Barak said today.

Under the interim self-rule accords signed last year between Israel and the PLO, the Israeli army is due to withdraw from most of Hebron, leaving behind a small force to protect some 400 Jewish settlers living among the city's 120,000 Palestinian residents.

Hebron is the last major West Bank city still under Israeli control after the Palestinian authority took over,

ROK rejects DPRK's offer of talks:

North Korea offered to resume inter-Korean dialogue following a brief thaw over Seoul's rice shipments to North Korean flood victims, but the offer was turned down by the South, officials said yesterday, AFP reports from Seoul.

Recently, North Korea has conveyed its wish to resume inter-Korean dialogue in Beijing, a National Unification Board (NUB) official said. But South Korea made a negative response to the North's proposal, asking Pyongyang to halt its hostile anti-South campaign first.

OIC for projecting Islam: The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the body representing more than a billion Muslims worldwide, says it is looking at ways of projecting a positive image of Islam to counteract negative publicity, Reuter reports from Dakar.

OIC Secretary General Hamid Algabdi told the organisation's Permanent Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs on Wednesday that a group of experts would be given the job of proposing solutions to the problem.

German hostage taking drama ends: Police special forces early Thursday overcame a gunman who was holding seven relatives hostage, including three children and a youth, police said, AFP reports from Trier, Germany.

The hostages were released and no one was hurt in the drama in the village of Lelenkaul in the Eifel region of West Germany.

A total of 70 police took part in the operation.

5 US tourists killed in Agra

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: Five US tourists were killed and four injured, three seriously, in a bus crash near the Indian city of Agra, a US Embassy spokesman said today, reports Reuter.

Local news agencies reported that two Indians were also killed when the bus, carrying about 30 passengers, went into a ditch on Wednesday night.

The embassy spokesman said the Americans were on a trip organised by the University of Pittsburgh, India's premier tourist attraction, the Taj Mahal, in Agra.

He named the dead as John Wilson, a staff member of the university and from the Pittsburgh area, and students Chereese Lauhere from Long Beach, California, Sarah Schewe from Amherst, Massachusetts, Jennifer Druck from Belmer, California, and Virginia Amato from Metairie, Louisiana.

CBI files corruption charges against 4 MPs EC asks parties not to exploit religion in polls campaign

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: Indian political parties have been asked not to exploit religion when campaigning for the general elections, a move seen as a blow to the country's aggressive Hindu fundamentalists, reports AFP.

The Election Commission has issued a series of "do's and don'ts" to the thousands of candidates who will fight the April-May polls, telling them to stay away from places of worship at all costs.

Parties have been urged not to create tension "between castes, communities or religious or linguistic groups" during the campaign, which has already got underway in some parts of the world's largest democracy.

"Temples, mosques, churches ... or any place of worship shall not be used as places for election propaganda," the Commission says.

The ruling, in a deeply religious country of more than 900 million people, has been hailed by political parties as an attempt to cool the religious tempers which frequently spark bloody Hindu-Muslim clashes.

"Elections are above religion," said Ved Prakash, a spokesman for Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's Congress (I) Party.

"Those who exploit it are really not following the true notions of democracy. Our policy is to abide by the code of conduct," he added.

The far-reaching edict is widely expected to hinder the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), which reaped a bonanza in the 1991 hustings with a shrill pro-Hindu campaign theme.

The Hindu-revivalist BJP bagged a record 119 seats in parliament five years ago by harping on its promise to build a grand Hindu temple.

Meanwhile, India's main investigating agency has filed corruption charges against four opposition MPs, accusing them of accepting huge bribes to prop up the government of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao in 1993.

Additional solicitor-general A N Jayaram told the Delhi High Court on Wednesday the cases had been registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against the MPs.

Blast hurts 35 UN-funded Afghan demining workers

ISLAMABAD, Mar 28: An explosion in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar wounded 35 UN-funded Afghan mine clearance workers, a demining group said today, reports Reuter.

A staff member of Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC) based in the Pakistani city of Peshawar said 19 ATC mine clearance workers and 17 from the Organisation for Rehabilitation (OMAR) had been wounded in the blast.

He said an ammunition dump had exploded at 2.30 am on Tuesday at a silo complex in central Kandahar where ATC and OMAR teams have their offices and accommodation.

The ATC staffer, who asked not to be named, said the ammunition had not been collected by the demining teams, which normally destroy mines and unexploded ordnance on the spot. He had no information what had caused the blast.

Government-controlled Kabul radio said some fighters of the rebel Taliban Islamic militia, which controls Kandahar, had also been killed or wounded when the dump went up.

A Taliban spokesman denied on Wednesday that any blast had occurred in the city.

Taliban sources in Peshawar said a large gathering of pro-Taliban religious leaders was due to begin a shura (council) meeting in Kandahar on Thursday to decide what strategy to adopt against President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

ATC and OMAR are among six Afghan Non-Governmental Organisations carrying out mine clearance work in Afghanistan under the supervision of UN international experts.

Amir shows no remorse for killing Rabin

TEL AVIV, Mar 28: Even as guards hauled him away to a life behind bars, convicted assassin Yigal Amir showed no remorse about gunning down Israel's prime minister, reports AP.

The 25-year-old former law student told the Tel Aviv court in his final statement Wednesday that Rabin had to be killed because his efforts to make peace by giving land to the Arabs were a calamity for the Jews.

"Everything I did, I did for God, for the Torah of Israel, the people of Israel and the land of Israel," Amir said. He dismissed the three-month proceeding as a show trial and told Judge Edmond Levy: "May God help you."

It was a typical proclamation by the determined young man who shocked the world and exposed the deep rifts in Israel by walking up to Rabin, reaching between security men and shooting him twice in the back with hollow-point bullets on November 4.

The three-judge panel convicted Amir and ordered the maximum sentence — life in prison for murdering Rabin, as well as six years for wounding his bodyguard.

Parole seems out of the question for the slightly built defendant, who throughout the trial exasperated his judge and many Israelis with his apparent indifference and unrepentant attitude.

Looking at his sister Hadas at his sentencing, Amir pointed upwards, as if to suggest that everything was in God's hands.

His black curly hair covered by a black skullcap, Amir yawned as Levy described him as a "wild growth" and suggested Israel must reevaluate an educational system that was failing to instill sufficient values.

Levy noted Amir is highly intelligent — his lawyers say tests placed his IQ at 144 far above average. But he also "has narcissistic and schizoid tendencies and sees the world in terms of black and white," Levy added, summarizing a court-ordered psychiatric examination.

"With premeditation and amazing calm, he decided that the death of the late prime minister was the only way to stop the peace process he opposed and he took this path to its very end," Levy said.

Amir tried to yell something after the sentence was pronounced, but guards quieted him and hustled him out of the courtroom.

The conviction and sentence were hardly a surprise: Amir was caught at the scene and confessed. An amateur video shows Amir loitering by Rabin's car and shooting the premier as he leaves a Tel Aviv peace rally.

Still, the trial transfixed Israelis, who were deeply shaken by the first high-level assassination in their modern history.

Robin's widow struggled to find the right words.

"What was left to prove?" Leah Rabin asked. "I have nothing to say about the verdict or the sentence. I do not wish him (Amir) anything because ... for me he does not exist."

Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who shared the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize with Rabin and PLO chief Yasser Arafat, said the punishment "pales in comparison to the crime."

Wednesday's four-hour session ended a trial that at times seemed like a circus.

Amir told the court he did not mean to kill Rabin but only to paralyse him.

In Israel, a life prison term usually means a convict will serve up to 25 years, with the sentence shortened by the president and additional time off for good behaviour. But Flishmar admitted that was not likely in Amir's case.

Russia forcing villages to sign peace deals: Dudayev

URUS-MARTAN, Russia, Mar 28: Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev slammed the peace deals that numerous villages in Chechnya have been signing under pressure from Russian forces, reports AP.

In a statement broadcast by the rebels' television service late Wednesday, Dudayev said the accords "only serve as a pretext for the Russians to attack the villages."

Under the agreements, the Russians promise security to individual villages if they pledge to exclude separatist fighters and cooperate with the pro-Moscow authorities.

Otherwise, the villages are attacked and occupied, often after being destroyed by Russian bombardments.

Dudayev said "with these accords, they can at any time cause a provocation, say the village has violated the village and attack, and there will be no one left to defend it."

He said he had no hope of an early end to the 15-month-old war as he had no confidence in the Russians who invaded to quash Dudayev's rebellion in December 1994.

Reuter adds from Moscow: Russian forces are unleashing their heavy firepower against Chechen rebels to try to bolster Moscow's negotiating position before President Boris Yeltsin gives details on Sunday of his long-awaited peace plan.

Military commanders in Yeltsin's political allies in the region said the troops had just four more days to pursue an offensive of intense air and artillery strikes launched against Dzhokhar Dudayev's separatist guerrillas two weeks ago.

FOCUS

VOICES ... Young People Speak Out

Golmal, Did You Say?

Golmal, what golmal? That was no such event, that was the War of Liberation. Sajid Rizwan Matin writes

Were you born at the time of Golmal?
Golmal! What Golmal?
You know, the '71 Golmal.
Oh, the Liberation War of Bangladesh?
Ah, yes that.
Well no, I was born in '73.

I guess everybody knows the meaning of the Bengali word golmal—chaos, noise, disorder etc. But I wonder how many of you knew that there is another meaning of this word. To some people, the word golmal resembles the glorious Liberation War of our country. The conversation printed above proves this shocking fact.

We have a history that could make us prouder than any other country in this sub-continent. Throughout time, our country has always stood up against foreign invaders and fought to weed out any evil stratagem. Our country has shown bravery against the British intruders, the people had fought against them for two hundred years and succeeded. But before leaving, the British renegade left our country under the Pakistani rulers like all other foreign rulers they also started to exorcise us and made the worst for our country. At first we had almost no power or role in the government. And when Awami League won the most seats in the parliament and became the major party in the 1970 election the true facade of the Pakistanis came out.

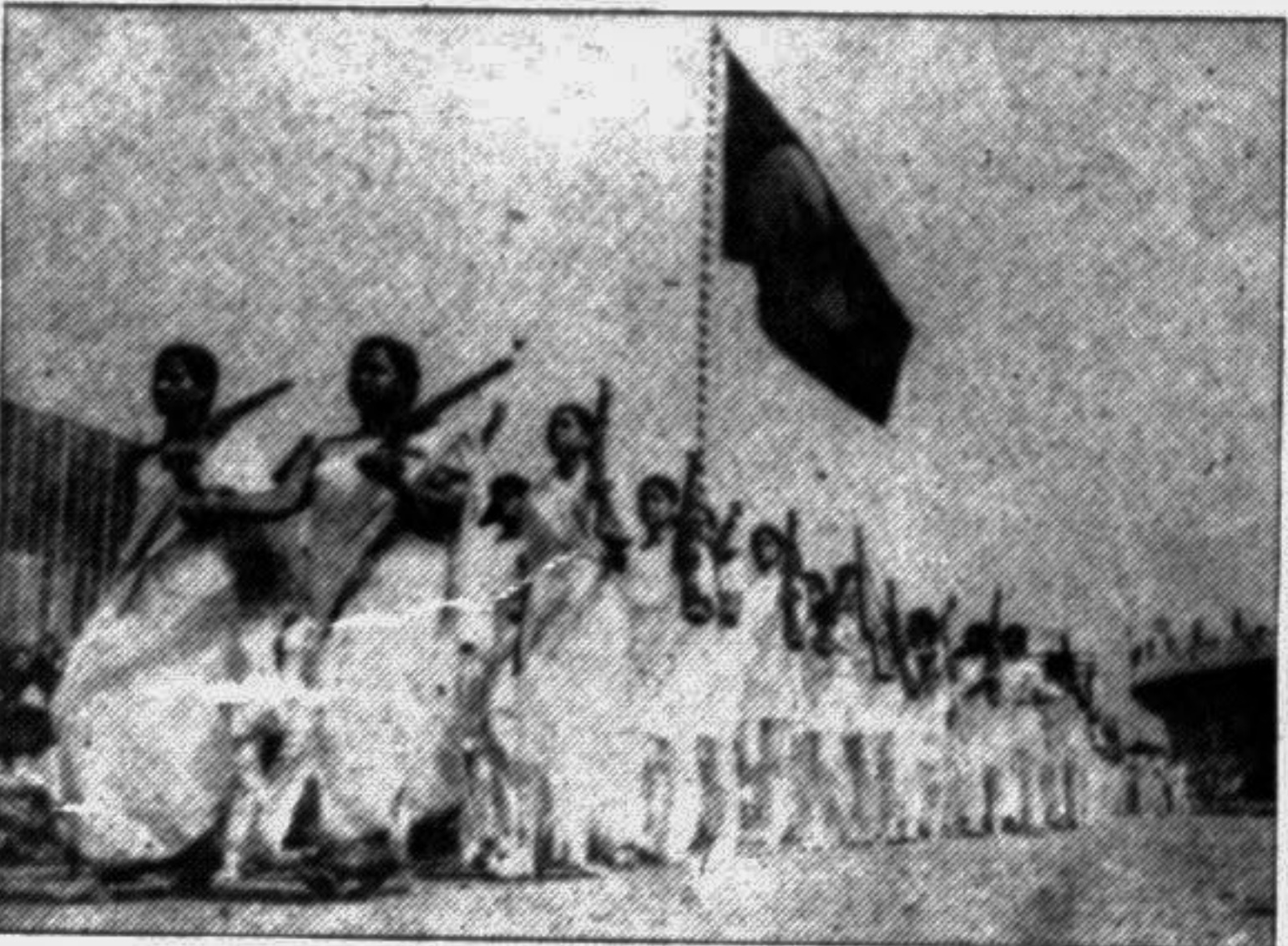
Their actual inclination was to dominate us and demolish any dreams for an independent country. To carry out their lust their evil claws came down upon us like a hungry and vicious wolf pack. They ripped us, they tattered us. They attacked the unarmed people, students and the sleeping, off-guard police and murdered as many as they could. They continued their butchery throughout the whole country, slaughtered three million people, raped thousands of women and girls, wiped out villages one after another, murdered the intellectuals and tried to shatter down our spirit. They had powerful countries like USA and China backing them up; even an US war fleet was headed towards the Bay of Bengal. But all their flagitious efforts went in vain, their malevolent acts could not impede us from being independent. We fought them hard, we fought them well. We were fortuitous to have India alongside us, who helped us by providing shelter and proffering their military service in our war. And now, whilst we have reached the 25th year of our liberty, all these blood-shed and sacrifices mean just golmal.

There are some people who still think that 1971 was just a massive chaos. It was a discord between Muslim brothers for which they have parted. They might as well think that these two brothers still reunited again. What an awful thought!

And most unfortunately these people now have a stable and a very secure position in our society. They are protected by a group of powerful people who never wanted Bangladesh to be separated from Pakistan. The fanatic Jamat and its other political wings are assuring these people's guardianship. With an attitude of devout and religious Islamic party they continuously are gaining supports to ignorant and pious general people. They have a great influence over these people.

By using this influence they are misleading them and trying to create a foundation of a perverted history. The Jamatis dream of assembling us with Pakistan again. Except for the general students and the Chhatk Dalal Nirmul Comity all other major political parties are not attempting to put an end to the Jamatis' heinous act. Because of the past leaders' foolishness, Jamat has spread out of their secluded holes, and because of the prevailing political greed and selfishness, they now are very strong and one of the leading parties of Bangladesh.

The people against Bangladesh's existence are scattered ubiquitously, they are camouflaged nearly in very institutes. It seems that there is a mysterious conspiracy underway to establish a greater Islamic country by joining with Pakistan again. Or else why can't anyone pronounce the words *Pakistan Hanadar Bahini, Razakar, Al Badar* on BT? There are not enough movies made on our Liberation War. And those that are made are not lucky enough to get a *censorship*. What is the intention behind it? All other nations have set forth to pic-



Do they seem ready for a golmal? Rashid Talukdar

ture the heroism and courage in their liberation movements through movies and tele-films. But in Bangladesh the war movies that came out were censored in such a way that they merely are evidences why and how our people fought and striven.

The dramas on Liberation War of Bangladesh that are shown on BT also raises suspicion. In these dramas the occupying military are described as *Hanadar Bahini*, they speak Urdu and wear khaki dresses. But there is no mention of which country they come from. A young child can easily misunderstand these *Hanadar Bahini* to be Indians, as Urdu language is very close to Hindi. There are also no notion of the Indian Army helping us or about the *razakars* helping the Pakistanis to plan mass-kill.

Most of the young people of our generation, the school and college students to be precise, have at least an idea on what actually happened in 1971. Yet there are some students who don't even know anything about our Liberation War. They confuse the *Pak Hanadars* with the Indians. Luckily the Bangla text books in Bengali medium still consist the fact that we fought against Pakistan and also say the stories of our *Biruttams*. But there is no word like *razakar* or no citation of their monstrous atrocity. So students are kept in the dark, they are not allowed to summarise the true history.

Our fathers and mothers have seen the war, they have fought for our country. They have told us their experience and described the straits, that is how we were able to sense the truth. But what would happen to our children or the grand-children? Will they be aware of the true history? After eighty years or so there would be no freedom fighters alive. There would also be no eye witness of our Liberation War. Unless we preserve the records of the past properly, who will be there to tell them the truth?

It's My Exam Time

Imran Khan doesn't understand why student leaders are least bothered about students' well-being, while he waits for an answer

In our national politics student politics has a great impact. If we look at the history of our country we can see our leaders played a great supportive role in all the national movements. Before our independence, our students fought against all sorts of undemocratic decisions made by Pakistani rulers.

The students played a very important role in our Language Movement and made history by sacrificing their lives for our mother tongue. But at that time students only involved in national crisis not in everyday national politics. Besides that, our student leaders talked about student's problems and tried to solve those.

But nowadays these things have changed. Now the different student groups have become some sort of spokesmen of their main political parties. As a result, they shifted away from their main aim. They are now not talking about their problems but they are talking about the national politics.

In all the government colleges of our country we have student politics and student unions. The main aim of these students union should be to focus the student problems in these colleges. But over the last two decades, they have failed to do so. They are now mainly busy assassinating rival student leaders. Often in these colleges student's wings of different political parties bring out processions. From these processions they give ridiculous threats to their oppo-

nents. They destroy the educational atmosphere of the campus by giving slogans like — "Hasinar Chandra Tule Nibo Amra" or "Khuni Khaledar Bichar Char".

But the most unfortunate aspect about our student politics is the easy availability of fire arms. The major student wings of country such as "Chhatra Dal" and "Chhatra League" both are reportedly to be in possession of fire arms. They have often been seen to use those arms to destroy their political opponents. Few days ago as available reports suggest in Rangpur both Chhatra Dal and Chhatra League brought out armed processions. In these processions these two groups openly showed off arms, reported BBC. This easy availability of arms make our student politics risky and fatal. Studious and general students are avoiding these politics. As a result, student politics of our country became some sort of business for some students, they show off their arms, threaten people and forcefully ask for *Chanda*. Few years ago, an innocent student of Dhaka College named Farhad was killed by the shopkeepers in Bakusah Market as a result of an armed clash between the shopkeepers and the student political wings.

In fact, all these things are happening inside our political parties. They are using our students for their own political gains. As a result, demands of general students are not being spoken out. Our educa-

tion department is making newer and newer ideas everyday and testing those ideas on us. But our 'student leaders' have not yet made any statement regarding this.

Many students of our country are not getting congenial atmosphere to sit for the SSC exams, yet our student leaders didn't utter a single word about this matter. They are only busy to find faults of our national leaders. Our textbook department has failed to distribute the books for Class IX in due time. Three months of this academic year have already passed. But our students have not yet received books to study. But our benevolent student leaders, are completely silent about it. In a reaction on the behaviour of our student leaders a student of Dhaka's famous college told this writer: "Our student leaders are rich businessmen. They are using cars and cellular phones. They have no time to focus the students' problems."

But time has come to change all these negative phenomena. If we don't discourage this type of student politics the main purpose of student politics will be neglected. More over this type of student politics will guide our students in the wrong way which is nothing but destroying of our future. generation. So the proper action by our government and political parties are badly needed. Why don't they show the students the right way anyway?