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# Violence on DU campus

There we go again!! DU campus broke into violence for two days because of the scuffle between students and army personnel, during a soccer game. Though it might sound like an isolated event that can happen between any people at any time but our student population, I am sure they are a vocal minority, decided to

University by some army personnel on August 20, 2007 was sad indeed. But what the students backed by politicians did on August 21 in various parts of the Dhaka city was extremely irresponsible. They have broken the glasses of hospitals in Dhanmondi such as Ibne Sina Medical Services

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Although I respect the army as a vital institution, I never support their involvement in civilian affairs unless they are totally controlled by the executive bodies of the civilian government.

At the same time, I always despise our students' nature of protests.

dent leaders"? I am not trying to support army camping on the campus, unless absolutely necessary. But the students, who are burning and destroying taxpayers' properties, should ask themselves if the campus was safer before. If not, then why they failed to protest this way against the

and privileged class of the society and they can take the law in their hands whenever injustice is done to them. They do not realise how lucky they are to be a selected few to attend universities which were supported by the meagre resource of this poor nation. Instead of using their energy and intellect to be equipped well to serve our nation, they try to bring chaos and anarchy to our campus and as a consequence bring misery to the whole nation.

Again, I am not collectively blaming all the students; it is always a few who incite the general students to follow their destructive path of creating chaos and anarchy. They should realise how lucky they are to receive higher education almost free. They should survey the world and see how much money it takes to receive a bachelor's degree in the developed nations. Please shun the path of destruction and learn to mind your business which is getting the best education. You have a noble purpose and role in building this nation in a competitive world. Look next door at India and find out how far their institutions of higher learning have advanced. Their students are competing with major western universities. They do not offer themselves to be used by the politicians. Please learn to protest injustice using peaceful means. Forget about the days when some of you brought havoc to our academic environment. You have ruined our famous universities. Our professors in absence of challenge from their students have become very outdated; they need to be academically challenged by their students in their subject areas to keep them on the edge. Wake up; millions of poor underfed faces are looking up to you for a better future. It is a new era for Bangladesh with the corrupts in jail, their rightful destination. Do not always make destructive criticisms.

Be an example of an educated person of honesty, integrity and hard work and a role model of decency and help this poor nation move forward.  
Shazib Chowdhury, Ph.D  
Byhalia, USA

## Lack of leadership

The leaders of a country are a mere reflection of society, like movies. Does Bangladesh have honest and efficient leaders? Are they different? Can they speak different languages, eat differently, dress differently and have different priorities? Leaders only care about their own interests. The moment they step outside their houses, everything becomes somebody else's responsibility. Leaders are not united, they don't even know/support other organisations which are fighting on their behalf. I have seen leaders of Bangladesh abroad who don't even smile at each other, nor even look with respect at each other when they are abroad. So naturally a lack of leadership is a problem. Interestingly, the people of Bangladesh are not even capable of understanding and supporting an honest and efficient leader. Last but not the least, leaders of Bangladesh are not law abiding citizens. Hence the society as such has lack of any strong ethics or any leadership. So they can't excel in real competitions.

It is a pity that Bangladesh is governed by inept people. I do not agree that corrupt politicians thrive because of a spineless bureaucracy. This happens because the entire nation (with a few exceptions) is spineless and not disciplined. The quality of our administration is deteriorating because we do not have good administrators. Corruption is rampant because we, from the very beginning, chose to elect selfish and inept leaders. As a result, crooks, criminals, smugglers, dacoits changed their labels and joined the bandwagon of "Netagiri/ Netrigiri". Now, where are the politicians about whom we are dreaming? And in their

absence, who will assert their will to put the governance in order?

Unfortunately, our people believed in those who were not worthy of their trust. We kept backing weak and lousy horses.  
Gopal Sengupta  
Canada

## Anti-Liberation forces

Jamaat-e-Islami people always talk about Islam and role of Allah and one of their election slogans was "Elect honest people, elect Jamaat people". We have seen the degree of their honesty during the tenure of the alliance government when crores of taka was looted but we have not seen any protest from them. Being the partner of the government, they should have taken the responsibility of this widespread loot and utter 'tawba' for their activities. Instead of doing that they are again trying to catch fish in muddy water. I would term these people as hypocrites and ask them to refrain from preaching their version of 'honesty' to the innocent people of Bangladesh.

In a recent interview, Ali Ahsan Mujahid, an alleged war criminal, tried to rationalise their role during the war of liberation. Nizami is giving verdict on who would be called the father of the nation etc. It is unfortunate that when this government is trying to make the history of our liberation war free from any bias showing due respect to all the leaders and the army chief Moyeen U Ahmed himself has realised that they are yet to show due respect to Bangabandhu, the war criminals pass such comments.

I would request the government to be aware of them and make them equally responsible for the immediate past government's activities.

The ACC may call for statement of assets of Jamaat leaders and everything will be clear then.  
Kazi Nasim Ahmed  
Zigatola Notun Rasta  
Dhaka



take it a step further and disrupt the nation, city and lives of other students, who unlike them, would like to study.

This incident took place because of the uncontrolled temper of the students and the army personnel. This should be settled in a court of law, exposure should be given in the newspapers by the journalists...everything should be done in a peaceful manner.

Why my friends or my kids have to miss a day of education because of a scuffle between people who cannot control their anger? If university students are caught in robbing and stealing, should all the students apologise and take responsibility?

This is utterly ridiculous and primitive!

M. Hassan  
Dallas, Texas  
USA

The incident of students being beaten in the playground of Dhaka

and Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital. Outdoor patients could not come out and suffered a lot.

Unfortunately, none of teachers will demand punishment to them. Even during the emergency the media is free to talk and also the people can criticise the government, what else we need for democracy? May be we need to have the right to destroy hospitals, to enforce hartal, to murder rival politicians and so on. After the incident one DU teacher said in a TV interview that the present civil government is a puppet government of the army. For the sake of argument, let us think he is right. May I ask which minister of the last BNP government was not the puppet of Tariq Zia and others? Similar things happened during the AL regime too.

Dr. Mahboob Hossain  
Associate Professor  
The University of Asia Pacific  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Look what they have done: they broke infrastructures, burned cars, put the life of fellow students and onlookers at risk, caused huge economic disruption and caused a mass hysteria throughout the nation. Honestly, how many of the young students on the street really care about Bangladesh's development? They are frustrated, I know. When I was in the ninth grade, I had to prevent a group of students of Dhanmondi Govt High School (my classmates, who else) from throwing rocks on the vehicles. They were juveniles. Since then I always wondered why students behave like that. I think they actually do not care about their country. They are actually looking for a war; they want to be heroes. I am being blunt, but I am sure my observations carry some truth. Again, I deplore the behaviour of some members of the army. But are our students in general any better? Where were these protesters when the residential halls were occupied by so called "stu-

fellow students who used to terrorise others?

Now, I would like to question our sincerity about a peaceful solution. When the General Staff of the Army tried to visit the Medical College Hospital, he had to leave. Why did not the students give him a chance to minimise the damage?

I request the students to think before making fire and breaking windows. It's the poor on the street who will suffer most. They do not care, nor do they share your romanticism of student politics. They want to go on with their lives. They do not want heavy philosophical or political jargons from classic revolutionary texts, they are happy to run their shops or pedal their rickshaws or drive their cabs.

If you really love your country or care for its people, please be proactive, rather than reactive.  
Tirtho Mahmood  
On e-mail

# Voter list

A brief comment of the Chief Election Commissioner was aired by the BBC Bengali Service following promulgation of an ordinance empowering the EC to prepare a "new" voter list with photo and National ID. According to the Chief Election Commissioner, this ordinance replaces the old law and could be considered as a new law.

Our memory is still very fresh and we can easily recall the events leading to promulgation of the State of Emergency on January 11. Perhaps we remember that the focal point of the much talked about political turmoil was the Election Commission, and preparation of a new voter list by the then EC. The rest is history. But one thing is possibly worth mentioning that the issue of the voter list went up to the Supreme Court.

Now my question is, what about the judgment of the SC regarding updating of the voter list based on the voter list of 2000 (hope I am correct)? Is this judgment also set aside by promulgation of the new ordinance? The new addition is affixing the photo of the eligible voter in the list. Does it mean that the EC can prepare a "new" voter list and affix

photo instead of updating the 2000 voter list and affix photo on that list? It is a legal issue. I hope legal experts would kindly give their considered opinion. We believe the EC would also be obliged to get a clarification from the appropriate authorities, which in my opinion is the SC.

I might sound cynical if I squeeze too much on the voter list issue, especially voter list with photo (without any aspersion on anybody, I am very skeptical about its 100% success). The recent history of the EC and the voter list tells us how a nation can be brought to a situation where democracy is halted. We only hope that the "new" voter list with photo would not be a "legal time bomb" and face numerous legal challenges when put to use for the promised national election by December 2008. One ought to remember that an incomplete or faulty voter list might jeopardize the whole roadmap of the EC.

One can easily set aside my opinion, but think twice before it is done. We take lessons not only from history, but also from the pages of life.  
A reader, On e-mail



## IMF's reply

The article "Business Leaders Critical of IMF's Dictat" (Aug 2), and editorial "Listen to Voice of Business Leaders" (Aug 3) highlight criticism, in a statement by top local business leaders, of government policy intentions to liberalise the external trade regime through lower import tariffs and tighter monetary policy.

The government's trade liberalisation policy intentions are, indeed, consistent with a strategy to sustain high growth, reduce poverty substantially, and benefit from increasing global and regional economic integration.

Contrary to what was reported, import tariffs and related charges in Bangladesh are still among the world's highest, and they exert considerable costs on domestic industries and consumers. With respect to monetary policy, central banks in the region and around the world are battling increasing price pressures and taking steps to tighten monetary policy. Bangladesh also faces these global realities. It is important to have an efficient and commercially-oriented banking system that can reduce lending rates from their current high levels as the IMF has emphasised repeatedly.

Finally, the fact that the IMF continues to support a pro-trade and pro-business agenda seems to escape the top business leaders in Bangladesh who signed the statement. Better infrastructure, good governance, less onerous regulation, and avoiding needless harassment of legitimate businessmen are a point specifically advocated by the IMF in recent discussions are the best ways to promote a healthy business environment.  
Thomas Rumbaugh  
Advisor  
Asia and Pacific Department, IMF

## Apolitical game

I am sorry to see the violence taking place in the streets of Dhaka and other cities. Even after all the demands were met, demonstration was still going on. When we were students in universities, we could-

never imagine of any such synchronized student demonstration on a short notice when there had been a crisis. To my realisation, so far, this may be a political sabotage taking place using the chain of command of the different wings (especially students) of the political parties. If this had been a protest of general students, it should have been stopped right after the meeting of all demands and also there should not have been damage to public properties. I express my regret as the filthy political leaders are still taking every chance to take back the country to the pre-one-eleven days.

They are still dreaming to grab this nation and play with it.  
AM Omar Shehab Uddin Ayub  
Software Engineer  
Banani, Dhaka

## Role of civil society

The DU incidents are a manifestation of pent up frustration and anger of the common people. It is not just an isolated incident in the playground.

We have always been writing to you that the Shushil Shomaj and their media partners have not been advising the caretaker government correctly.

The members of the Shushil Shomaj seem to know nothing about democracy, freedom, human rights, neither do they know anything about history, ethics, social contract etc.  
A Freedom Fighter  
On e-mail

## Attention: students

The recent flare-up at Dhaka University is very disturbing. We do not know the trigger cause of the incident. It was certainly wrong to beat up students. Equally, it is wrong for the student bodies to react violently. When will our students learn to protest injustice in a peaceful manner without taking up law in their own hands? I am very concerned about their behaviour. Politicians have misused them as their instrument of power wielding. Students also feel that they are a special chosen class



# DRockStars and underground music

Our underground bands have harnessed the alternative rock and metal genres of music for a long time. Now DRockStars provide a platform for the talented musicians. While it exists for commercial reasons, it nonetheless promotes the obscure bands to limelight. Bands like Dour and Bortoman deserve recognition. Under the watchful eyes of

eminent judges, they are one-step away from stardom.

However, rock music is still confined to those people who are rich enough to buy guitars, keyboard and drums. If anyone can get hold of a guitar, he downloads some guitar tabs from internet, labels himself as a guitarist and soon forms a band. The bands mushrooming are mostly aimed

at impressing their peers and earning fame while they lack devotion to music. If DRockStars continue to hunt for bands only, they will neglect many aspiring musicians whose dreams are restricted due to lack of money, organisation and proper guidance.  
Ananya Das  
A Level student  
Cephalon International  
East Basaboo, Dhaka

## Agitation or exploitation?

What happened in Dhaka and other places in the country could be literally considered a wildfire. A sudden outburst of fire ignited an unprecedented agitation caused by a ridiculous scuffle between certain students and army men at DU, leading to curfew. If anybody thinks it is only a student oriented protest s/he is likely to be fooled because it is nothing but a deliberate exploitation of students by the godfathers behind the scenes.

The problem could be peacefully resolved within the DU, but instead what we saw was a sudden outburst of agitation in all the public universities! Being stuck in my room, I have just one question: who provoked the students to act like this? Who was behind it? Certainly some quarters took the chance. It is quite unnatural for only students to reach such an apex of atrocity.

A fire was set and eventually political patrons added fuel to the fire that spread in a minute throughout the nation. What we

have seen is totally frustrating and appalling to the education system and democracy as well. This might be a great challenge for the present caretaker government to root out the master planners who deliberately arouse the students to such an unexpected demonstration.

However, clamping curfew is the last thing that the government should consider in such a situation.  
Anjan  
A worried student of DU