

DHAKA UNIVERSITY

Students face problems in absence of DUCSU

BSS, Dhaka

Demands for the election of Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) appears to be resurfacing again among ordinary students as the country's premier campus has not seen activities of the crucial student forum for over two decades.

"It appears that the Dhaka University loses its traditional academic character for want of the central student union," said Mamun Ahmed, a student of Economics department.

The ordinary students as well as university authorities, he said, are facing different problems, which could have been settled with a vibrant DUCSU as student unions are supposed to be the most effective academic forum of any university across the world.

"The absence of DUCSU has contributed to the rise of unhealthy student politics in the past two decades when muscles instead of intellect dominated the campus," said Nasim Ahmed, a final year student of English department.

Dhaka University saw its last central student union election in late eighties as usual for one-year tenure amid a different political circumstance as the country at that time was witnessing a growing campaign against autocratic rule.

But even after the installation of successive democratic governments, little initiatives were taken to hold the DUCSU polls blaming the "unfavourable campus situation."

A number of senior university students said the student organisations backed by major political parties played the role of DUCSU pretending to stand by an ordinary student providing a valuable seat in

dormitories in exchange for loyalty to their parties.

Even a political student organisation evict ordinary students from the dormitories to be replaced by non-student hooligans or outside armed cadres, said Zafarullah Sohie, a student of International Relations department.

Several teachers of the university agreed that the muscle flexing "cadres" would not have got access to the campus or the halls had DUCSU was in place to see the problems of the common students.

"A central student union or the hall student unions are also needed for the healthy entertainment practices and cultural activities on the campus, of which Dhaka University remained deprived for the past two decades," said Prof Ataur Rahman, a senior teacher of Political Science department.

He recalled the vibrant cultural and extracurricular activities like holding sports, debate competitions, staging plays and organising musical festivals on the campus under the auspices of DUCSU and hall student unions when Dhaka University said to have witnessed its golden times despite various difficulties.

The more dangerous thing is that the absence of an elected student forum like DUCSU leads the student organisations to be unaccountable and as a result instead of mobilising student supports they tend to dominate the campus with muscle power," he said.

A former Dhaka University student and senate member preferring anonymity said the widely criticised "unhealthy teachers' politics" also was encouraged in the absence of the elected students forum.

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been the root cause of the rise of unhealthy student politics in the past two decades when muscles instead of intellect dominated the campus," said Nasim Ahmed, a final year student of English department.

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to seek "progress" in the abduction row, but Tokyo and Washington are at loggerheads about what constitutes progress.

Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura, speaking before a parliamentary committee Thursday, said that Japan wanted to see the kidnap victims come home.

"We cannot say it is a 'solution' to the issue even if some of the abductees return to Japan, but we may be able to consider it 'progress,'" Komura said, as quoted by Kyodo News.

Japan has voiced unease since North Korea entered a six-nation deal in February to dismantle its nuclear programmes in exchange for aid and diplomatic benefits.

In the latest step, Pyongyang has pledged to permanently disable its Yongbyon reactor and declare all other nuclear programmes by the end of the year.

"A country that does not free

hostages is a terrorist state, pure and simple," she said.

The United States has promised

Japan or overseas, between September 1977 and July 1983 to train spies who could then pose as Japanese when infiltrating South Korea.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-il linked to the kidnappings in 2002, saying the regime had abducted 13 Japanese and allowed five to return home with their families.

Pyongyang, contrary to Tokyo's belief, says the others are dead and the issue is closed.

"Japan believes the eight (people) that North Korea claims as dead are still alive and are being used as translators or teachers," Nakayama said.

North Korea had also kidnapped people of other nationalities, including hundreds of South Koreans, she said.

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