

Hold Ducsu election for healthy student politics

Demand general students

BSS, Dhaka

Demand for election to Dhaka University Central Students Union (Ducsu) appears to be resurfacing again among general students after years of gap as the country's premier university has not seen activities of the crucial students' forum for over two decades.

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

The general students as well as the university authorities, he said, are facing different problems which could have been settled with vibrant Ducsu and hall unions, as student unions are supposed to be the most effective academic forums of any university across the world.

"The absence of Ducsu has contributed to the rise of unhealthy student politics during the past two decades when muscle power instead of intelligence dominated the campus," said Nasim Ahmed, a final year student of English department.

DU saw its last Ducsu election in the late eighties for one-year tenure amid a different political circumstance as the

country at that time was witnessing a growing campaign against autocratic rule.

A number of senior university students said the student organisations backed by major political parties had played the role of Ducsu pretending to stand by an ordinary student providing a valuable seat in dormitories in exchange for loyalty to their politics.

"We have seen even a worse scene when a student organisation with political backing evicted common students from the dormitories to be replaced by non-student hooligans or outside armed cadres," said Zafarullah Sohel, 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 dormitories had the Ducsu been in place to see the problems of 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 DU remained deprived for the past two decades," said Prof Emeritus Serajul Islam Chowdhury.

The vibrant cultural and extracurricular activities like holding of sports, debate competitions, dramas and musical festi-

vals on the campus under the auspices of Ducsu and hall student unions when DU said to have witnessed its golden times despite various difficulties, he recalled.

Prof Chowdhury said, "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."

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

"The election to Ducsu will definitely have a positive impact in restoring accountability of teachers as well as the student groups as they won't take the risk of losing popularity through unfair practices," he said.

Analysts said the Ducsu in the past also played a crucial political role during the time of national transitions like the liberation war in 1971, language movement in 1952. It could now play an effective role in shaping the campus atmosphere befitting to the university, once known as the Oxford of the East, they added.



PHOTO: STAR

Colonel Taher Sangsad forms a human chain in Shahbagh in the city yesterday with a call to make public the documents of Col (Retd) Taher trial. The event was organised on the occasion of November 7.

IT education compulsory at secondary level by 2013

Says information minister

BSS, Dhaka

Reiterating the present government's commitment to building Digital Bangladesh, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad yesterday said IT education would be made compulsory at secondary level by 2013.

"As per its election manifesto, the government is pledge-bound to build Digital Bangladesh by 2021. To this end, information technology (IT) education will be made compulsory by 2013 and primary level by 2021," he said while inaugurating the nine-day Digital ICT Fair-2009 in the city.

The information minister also said that the ICT taskforce formed by the previous Awami League government would be reactivated and high-tech parks and IT villages would be set up in the country for flourishing the ICT sector.

"To keep pace with the present time, the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already taken various steps for flourishing the ICT sector to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh," he said.

Multiplan Centre Shop Owners

Association has arranged the fair at the Multiplan Centre at Elephant Road in the city with the slogan 'Let ICT be a Tool for Changing Days'.

With convenor of the fair Tawfique Ehsan in the chair, the function was addressed, among others, by FBCCI President Anisul Haque, Chairman of SME Foundation Aftab Ull Islam, President of Bangladesh Shop Owners Association Amir Hossain Khan and Chief Adviser of Greater Elephant Road Shop Owners Association and former parliament member Mostafa Mohsin Montu.

To reach the IT facilities to the people's doorsteps, the information minister said the government has distributed computers to many schools of the country and the students have already started getting its benefits.

"The government has also taken initiatives for providing ICT training to the unemployed youths to create job opportunities for them," he said, seeking cooperation of the ICT entrepreneurs to this end.

The information minister also said the government cannot do everything alone and all should come forward to take the country ahead.

"With the cooperation of all, we want to build Bangladesh as a non-communal liberal democratic country to ensure good governance, social justice and welfare of the people," he said.

Mentioning that the ICT sector is playing an important role in taking the country forward, the information minister called upon the ICT experts to familiarise the people with modern digital devices.

He urged the organisers of the fair to keep the prices of computers and its accessories at tolerable level so that maximum people can purchase those.

The information minister also said the government believes in free flow of information and to ensure it the Right to Information Act was already passed in the Jatiya Sangsad.

Organisers said about 400 shops have been set up from the fourth floor to the tenth floor on an area of about one lakh square feet at the Multiplan Centre, the largest IT market in the country.

The entrance fee of the fair has been fixed at Tk 10. However, school students can visit the fair without any fee. The fair will remain open from 10:00am to 8:00pm everyday till November 15.

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