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Does the provost wonder how his students are doing, when he goes to sleep at night? Does the house tutor go to bed knowing that all the students are safe? Do they guarantee those before going to bed? What is the legacy of the university they are leaving behind—this, they will have to be answerable for.

JAMILUR REZA CHOWDHURY,
PRESIDENT OF BUET ALUMNI, VICE-
CHANCELLOR OF UNIVERSITY OF
ASIA PACIFIC

Ban student political organisations

As President of BUET alumni, we placed seven demands, one of which is delinking of student organisations, who are officially or unofficially linked with national political parties.

The students can do politics, but not on campus. Universities are guided by their acts. Our act states that teachers and students cannot become formal members of political parties. If this is a violation of human rights, then they can go to the court, and let the court decide. In 2002, when Sabikun Nahar Sony died during a conflict between

situation rigorously. But over the years, the provosts stopped visiting the halls regularly—they are negligent of the students who are pampered by political parties.

**LUCKY AKHTER, FORMER
PRESIDENT OF CHHATRA UNION,
FAMED "AGNIKANYA" OF THE 2013
SHAHBAGH PROTESTS**

All student political organisations cannot take the fall

A ban on student politics in BUET is ridiculous, because its constitution doesn't allow student politics. In the last 10 years, no other organisation except BCL has been able to get a foothold there, and radical extremist wings managed to find space undercover in the absence of formal political activities.

When I was president of the Bangladesh Students' Union, we wanted to do a training and a cultural programme in BUET and they did not let us, because they said that no politics is allowed inside. Then how did BCL manage to do politics? For decades terrorist actions by a few organisations have been dubbed as student politics. To me, an independent administration

organisation played any significant role in these. When students want to take a stance against injustice, they neither need any political leader to make the call to organise, nor do they need any organisation's slogan to rally after. These political organisations, which are completely unrelated to student issues, hamper the academic environment by having routine showdowns, and by inviting external cadres into the campus

**ZONAYED SAKI, CHIEF
COORDINATOR OF GANOSAMHATI
ANDOLON**

Ban on student politics excuses the administration

A ban on student politics is not going to help. Whatever is happening on campus is a reflection of national level politics—will you stop national politics then? The current government is to blame for the state that BCL is in right now.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science & Technology University did not have proper student politics, but BCL still held hold. We have all recently been made aware to what went on there. If we ban student politics



COURTESY

Bangladesh Chhatra Dal factions, a notice was issued forbidding the students from organising rallies etc without getting approval from the administration, or risk repercussions. They can only operate clubs and societies if they get approval from the authorities.

As the vice-chancellor of a private university, we have meetings with guardians of students once a year. The guardians are unanimous in their decision that the campus should not have politics or political parties. Some private universities also make their students sign an undertaking stating that they will refrain from student politics. If they do not agree then they should go for universities where political activities are allowed.

BUET administration has failed to identify that student politics is a problem. They have not taken any preventive or corrective action regarding the current situation. Our former administrators say that it is unimaginable that such torture cells can exist within BUET! During their regime, the hall officials would monitor the



GRAFFITI: AKIBUR RAHMAN SHIKDER

should be responsible for restricting the oppressive conduct of any organisation. But as the autonomy of the universities have been fading away since long, the university administrations are kneeling more and more to the power of party student wings. I think restoring democratic practices can improve the situation and you cannot do that without political practices.

AURONI SEMONTI KHAN,
INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE
WHO CONTESTED DUCSU 2019
ELECTIONS

The student politics of Bangladesh is no longer about student rights. It is about protecting the interests of national level political parties, and gaining unethical benefits in exchange. BUET has not banned student politics. They simply banned the activities of cadre-based political organisations, which is a very practical solution to the current context, I believe.

In recent times, the biggest student protests have been the quota reform movement and road safety movements of last year. No established political

completely, then the situation becomes even more undemocratic, because nobody will remain to oppose the ruling party. BCL is doing crime, then why are we penalising the others?

Instead of banning student politics, other steps can be taken. The government and the ruling party need to stop intervening into the universities. If a person needs to pander to ruling party student organisations just to become a house tutor, or if a professor needs to grovel behind politically influential people just to get a job, then how will you ensure student rights? In addition, the political organisations of the students cannot have any special privileges, like being able to control the allocation of dormitory seats. We always had a trend of crime perpetrated by student party organisations in campuses. But the administration and the law enforcers need to remain vigilant, and take appropriate steps.

I believe that the BUET vice-chancellor took this step just to escape his own responsibility of tackling the bigger problem of reforming the university.