

## Educational Aberration

If the first two days of this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations are any guide, there is no knowing how the holding of all the papers' examination will be completed and at what cost. On the first day as many as 4,000 examinees were expelled and about 50 people were left injured amidst sporadic incidents of violence in different places. On the second day although the number of the expelled from examination centres dropped to 750, widespread clashes and more gripping violence left one magistrate stabbed, another assaulted by mobs, 73 injured including seven policemen. All because the examinees in some centres were either not allowed to adopt unfair means or taken to task for doing the same.

Clearly, all our public examinations are usually held in an atmosphere far from peaceful. The reasons too are not far to seek. The quality of education has recorded a marked decline over the years and the number of rogue students is increasing with time. Both the guardians and teachers have failed to guide them and some of the parents and school authorities are to blame for becoming a party to academic malpractices. So society is reaping the fruit of what it has sown. How come that the young ones become so aggressive, desperate and dishonest on refusal of a demand which everyone views as illegal. This is hardly possible unless of course they can muster support from some quarters. The support can be both direct and indirect. Direct, when their peers and guardians join them in their offensive against the invigilators or their teachers; indirect, when their parents accept bribes or have recourse to similar other corrupt practices and yet can hold onto different social and other positions.

There is no surprise that a new breed of examinees is coming up fast who would not accept the traditional hard way of schooling and learning. They would rather prefer the easy way out or the short-cut of success through copying at the examination halls. An interesting observation is that the centres infamous for their indulgence in such unfair means could not be cancelled for reasons of political pressure. Now you know why the authorities at different levels of examinations running cannot be fully successful in getting rid of the copying problem despite the best of intent. And then there are those who would not only turn a blind eye to such practices but even go all the way to help them occur. So what is happening in our education arena is a reflection of the social rot we have become a witness to.

Yet an incorruptible education system is what could be an effective defence against such degeneration of society. If we are serious about keeping education beyond all petty—including political—considerations, we still can do so and make society a better place to live in.