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Students Apologetics

Students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) have reportedly apologised to the Vice-Chancellor and Teachers' Association of the University regretting the incidents that occurred last year. The news value of this report lies in the fact that for quite a long time in this part of the student world such a thing has rarely been heard of. To be able to say sorry for anything done by an individual group or even a country takes a lot of moral courage.

Once however one could bring oneself to such confession or contribution, what usually happens and ought to happen is a wiping out of the past and a return to normal relations of mutual loyalty, friendship and harmony. We are not interested in what exactly happened on those dates for the simple reason that 'apology' should get the better of the unpleasantnesses caused. Nor will we like to pry into the details of the report submitted by the enquiry committee appointed for this purposes or the charges brought against some students.

It will be unfair to assume that our young people in the universities or colleges are wholly incapable of good behaviour. There is, though, an almost universal feeling that student discipline is a thing of the past. To support such a cynical view of students, there are of course numerous cases of wild student behaviour. But we still believe that all is not lost and the situation can be very much reclaimed more by sympathy and understanding from authority than routine action on the assumption that students can never be good.

The BUET example could mark a turning point, in student conduct, and the aftermath of this most commendable student response to authority is bound to bring more such student groups to appreciate the need for regretting their unseemly actions, if any.