

ENSURE ACADEMIC ATMOSPHERE

The educational institutions in the country have indeed become hostages in the hands of the hoodlums. The hopes raised by the role of the student community played during the mass upsurge against autocracy have died out. The unity and maturity they displayed at that phase now seem to a dream. They have since lapsed not only into inter-party rivalries but also factional squabbles and often get down to gun-running.

Terming the growing violence and incidences of armed terrorism as a 'national malady', a teacher said, "we have to ponder what compelled the teachers of Chittagong University to take alternative classes outside their campus." There is a strong opinion that the political parties should own up the responsibilities of campus violence, for the trouble-shooters are allegedly mostly under their shelter.

There have of course been attempts at checking the trend but they have so far either backfired or proved ineffective. The ugly incident at the meeting of the national leaders with the Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University is a pointer. The meeting was convened by the Vice Chancellor on May 27 to discuss the ways and means to control violence on the campus.

The efforts, however, continued and the leaders of the major student organisations held a joint meeting with the Vice Chancellor on June 10. The meeting called upon the government and the law enforcing agencies to take necessary steps to make the campus 'arms and terror free' and ensure a congenial atmosphere.

The government has also been reiterating from time to time their determination to put an end to violence in the educational institutions. All the same such incidence keep on taking place. The issue finally found echo in the Jatiya Sangsad Thursday last. Apprehension was expressed that the situation already tense with rival parties facing each other with arms would further deteriorate if urgent action was not forthcoming. The concern is apparent in the remark "what benefit would we derive debating the budget and the constitution, bypassing the situation." The issue would be taken up soon for full dress discussion.

The events taking place meanwhile are also of great import. The elections to the Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (JUCSU) and hall unions were held yesterday. The campaign ended earlier without any untoward incident and strong security measures were taken for the polls. The office-bearers of the Dhaka University Students' Union (DUCSU) also in a statement issued on Thursday said that the terms of the present committee was over and urged the authorities for holding the polls immediately. The incidence of violence also continue to take place claiming valuable lives. The leaders of some of the major political parties have blamed each other of being behind the troubles.

The Dhaka University opened yesterday after an extended Eid-ul-Azha holiday. The extension was necessitated by a violent incident on the eve of the holiday. The security arrangements were stringent enough, with police contingents at the entrances of the dormitories and at other key points. The university authorities checked identity cards to prevent intrusion of non-students. The Vice Chancellor and the University Education Atmosphere Council (UEAC) decided on Thursday that no rally or procession would be held on the campus in the first week of the opening without permission. But even the opening of dormitories on Friday was marked by violence and flouting of the decision.

The situation really calls for attention of the whole nation. There could, however, be salutary impact if corporate activities on the campus were limited to bonafide regular students. There are allegations that the rolls continue to be inflated by irregular students while fresh admission seekers have to go disappointed. The campus must be rid, at the first instance, of those whose purpose is other than academic.

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