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Dhaka University Day

The enthusiastic celebration of the Dhaka University Day-88 Friday last is reassuring. We would like to dismiss the ugly minor incident in the afternoon of the festive day as an apparition of the retreating demon of violence that had virtually established a steady reign in the campus. We would rather like to believe that the proud declaration of the Vice-chancellor Prof. Abdul Mannan that "violence has now been controlled in Dhaka University" is no mere rhetoric. The record of the recent past is encouraging. The Vice-chancellor has rightly claimed credit for the contribution of the University Syndicate, the disciplinary Action Committee and the Education Environment Council in fighting campus violence. Let this relative peace on the campus as well as the restored academic atmosphere be consolidated.

The trinity of campus violence, forced closures of classes and the resultant session jams has afflicted the university since the 1960s. Vice-chancellor Mannan has pointed out that during the seven and a half years from July 1980 to December 1987, the Dhaka University was closed for about four and a half years. A former Vice-chancellor of the Jahangirnagar University Prof. Zillur Rahman Siddiqui has calculated that during the last 16 years 16 lakh man-years have been lost due to session jams at the graduate and post-graduate levels in the country. Prof. Siddiqui has sounded a grim warning: "A lost generation may engulf the future of the entire nation."

It is now agreed in all quarters that the university authorities are not the actual villain of piece. Outside influences are mainly responsible for spoiling campus atmosphere. Here becomes relevant the call that the former Foreign Minister Prof. Muhammad Shamsul Haq, who was also an acting Vice-chancellor of the Dhaka University, made in his address as the chief guest at the 1988 Dhaka University Day celebration. Prof. Haq has called upon the powerful quarters of the society to cooperate with the university authorities in re-establishing a proper academic atmosphere on the campus.

Vice-chancellor Mannan has reiterated his appeal to the politicians, professionals and the student leaders to cooperate with the university authorities in maintaining a violence-free atmosphere on the campus. We hope that his appeal will receive a favourable response from all concerned quarters.

Vice-chancellor Mannan has echoed the wish of all when he repeated—repeated a thousand times—the call to all concerned to respect the autonomy of the university and also the 1973 University Act. This will obviously help institutionalisation of academic atmosphere on the campus.