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Chittagong University in Turmoil

It seems that none of the student wings of political parties is interested in seeing the Chittagong University re-open after 103 days of an unscheduled vacation. Classes were supposed to resume yesterday (Saturday) after the vacation but Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, has asked the railway authorities to stop running the shuttle train between the town and the university campus. The student wing of the ruling party, however, has called upon the railway people to operate the shuttle service. All this has created a lot of tension in the area.

The All Party Students Alliance (APSA), dominated by the Shibirites, called for an indefinite strike at the CU campus on 1 February placing a five-point demand that included the removal of VC and Pro-VC of the university. All attempts to solve the problem through a dialogue between the students and the liaison committee formed in this connection, have failed. The authorities in sheer exasperation, it seems, have decided to open the university with police assistance. APSA meanwhile has threatened to resist any train movement between the city and the university with a suicide squad. They have not stopped at that. They have even threatened to enforce a 72-hour hartal if their leaders were arrested under PSA during their agitation. The Chittagong University situation has turned from bad to worse due to the indifference of the highest authority. A section of the teachers found fault with the administration for their complicity and dual role in precipitating the crisis requesting that the chancellor and the government intervene immediately to set the situation right. Intervention from the top in an acute crisis is perhaps unavoidable; but let's not make it a practice of overlooking the basic responsibility of university authorities in such matters.

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