



## Educational plunge

The fast-unto-death by some students of Ramna Railway High School continued last week demanding an alternative site for the school building before removing it from Osmani Udyan in Dhaka. A few hunger strikers were admitted to hospital and some girl students and teachers also joined the strike. They expressed firmness to continue the strike till their demands were met. Earlier a government decision to demolish the present building started the whole turmoil, and the hunger strikers have some legitimate grievances. Different socio-political organizations called upon the government to reconsider its decision according to the demands put forward by the strikers.

Meanwhile, the President met with the Vice Chancellors of different universities last week and stressed the need for taking adequate measures to make higher education suitable to the requirements of the country and society. The President as the Chancellor of the universities made the comments during a regular monthly meeting of the Vice Chancellors. The meeting was informed that a committee headed by Prof. Nurul Islam was constituted to suggest measures to upgrade the syllabus and curriculum of the medical colleges. Another committee, headed by former minister Mahbubuzzaman as convener, was formed to review and update the syllabus of the Agriculture University. The meeting also endorsed the action taken by the government to quell adoption of illegal means during examinations at all levels, and the Education Ministry was asked to continue its efforts in this connection.

The above reports reveal clearly that all is not well with the education sector. In the meantime, the government is taking all preparations to observe 1990 as International Education Year, according to the UN decision in this regard. The government has also unveiled a plan to eradicate illiteracy from the country by the year 2000. All these moves of the government are taken against the backdrop of a deep plunge in the quality of education in the country. The cancer of campus violence is spreading and is on the rise hindering further the chance of a healthy growth of this vital sector.

All our higher educational institutions, including all the universities, are being throttled through various measures. Unscrupulous administration and management, violence, session jams and political disturbances are paralyzing university level education in the country. For the lack of a national education policy this sector, like many others, is gradually being crippled and the whole nation is watching the situation in profound agony. It seems that a deliberate policy of keeping the people ignorant and illiterate in the long run is going on. Construction of structural facilities only is not going to help the situation.

Surprisingly, this regime had scrapped the illiteracy eradication campaign of the last administration but now the government has assigned the campaign to be resumed from the 1990s. The administrative inertia to address this national problem is really astounding. We have mentioned earlier that literacy and education are the primary conditions for the proper development of a nation. Neglecting this will only worsen the socio-political situation in the country. Finding the priorities of the nation and acting accordingly should be our motto; ignoring this fact is going to derail the nation.

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