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To Help Campuses

Five top intellectuals of the nation on Wednesday met with President Shahabuddin to express their concern over deteriorating university campus situation and sought his help in curbing campus violence. The intellectuals have acted laudably. President Shahabuddin has already done his best to call the nation's, specially the political parties' attention to the blistering problem. Nothing has visibly come out of all of his outspoken speeches. Now the intellectuals are asking him to do perhaps more.

The Jahangirnagar University situation was in particular discussed by the callers. The culprits were let out with quite benign punishment, they seemed to feel. The rapists and their accessories all belonged to a student party that has become an embarrassment to the government in this particular case. The root cause of it all is that while student parties use the parent political parties for power and protection they do not lend themselves to the latter's discipline. The easy answer is to disconnect all student parties from the political ones and allow the government to go about disciplining the student bodies by their own means, caring not for the connections that can linger.

There can be no panacea for the plummeting universities. But resistance to the decline must start somewhere. And the above is one crucial point. Another is full play to student power that JU students in general displayed in their recent resistance movement. The student parties have degenerated into stifling true student power and replacing it with mafia power. The teachers too have a role; it is sad that it comes so late on the list. While the beginning of the normalcy road must be made by political parties, the end part will lie with the university administration.