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ON THE EXAM ISSUE

The Education Ministry has taken the right step by not yielding to the pressure of a section of HSC students to shift the date of their examinations which are scheduled to begin on June 25. It is obvious that a sudden shifting of the date without any cogent reason will help in creating another session jam at the secondary and higher secondary levels of education. It is rather strange that the students who were agitating on the streets in Dhaka on Saturday should be demanding rescheduling an examination which is still three months away on the ground that they need more time to take the necessary preparations. Three months should be sufficient time to get ready for the exams for any student if he or she had been attending classes regularly, following the lessons and keeping abreast with the studies. If he has been on the contrary spending time during the two years of the academic session in activities unrelated to his studies, then even an additional year would not be time enough for him.

The students who were on the streets indulging in vandalism and lawlessness, blocking traffic and endangering public security, to register their demand are not certainly the kind of 'students' who would be ever ready for a proper exam no matter how much time was given to them. There is no justifiable reason to jeopardise the coming HSC examination and harm the interest of the great majority of students by shifting the date. Rather the law should have taken action against these delinquents so that the budding tendencies towards violence were nipped before they became ingrained traits. The problem of students violence should be tackled right where it germinates in the lower educational institutions. At the level of the universities it becomes too complicated and involved and an easy solution is not possible. Unfortunately, in Saturday's incident police made no arrest although the loss of public property due to the violent activities had been substantial and traffic in west Dhaka remained snarled for hours.

The decision on when and how examinations should be held is the prerogative of the education boards. In this the students can and should not have any say. The guardians of the students have a moral right in preserving the interests of their wards if there is a genuine ground to suspect that those interests were being ignored. Once students start to decide how courses of studies should be designed and when examinations should be held, it will signal the decline and end of discipline in the education system. We are witnessing a situation of a similar nature in the higher education arena. The universities, no wonder, are plagued by session jams and there is no resolution to the problem in sight. We should not now put secondary education in a similar predicament by weakening to the illogical and unjustified demands of a section of students.