

Dhaka Sunday, September 15, 1985

University and arms

The spectacular police raids on Dhaka University halls and recovery of lethal weapons constitute a firm step towards stopping violence in the campus. The necessity of it was long felt and both the university authority and the law enforcing agencies have happily combined their efforts to ensure peace in the premier university of the country. The unhealthy trend of speaking in the language of weapons by a small section of students and outsiders must be eliminated at all costs. The situation in the university became a matter of grave concern to all citizens and none felt comfortable watching the atmosphere in the university going from bad to worse.

The arms recovery on Friday has certainly blackened the image of Dhaka University which has such a glorious past and which contributed so immensely to political and other developments of this nation. It must have been painful to the majority students to see their favourite Alma Mater being polluted by the actions of a handful of so-called students. This small group of students in collaboration with outside elements has created a situation which not only destroys academic peace but also threatens the lives of innocent students, teachers and others.

While the majority of students want to pursue their academic activities in peace and order this small section of so-called students held the university at ransom to fulfil their evil designs. Ordinary citizens fell happier to note that the silent majority of students are now coming up to resist them and are extending fullest cooperation to the authorities. Stronger internal resistance by students themselves will help improve the conditions rapidly and effectively. This will also help revive much of the lost image of Dhaka University.

According to some newspaper reports, much of the deadly weapons which were present in the university have been removed by those people who were using them anticipating stern police measures. The law enforcing agencies must continue their drive to recover all hidden arms and bring to book all those who were keeping them unauthorised, without favour or discrimination.

Friday's actions are welcome. But the police must keep a vigilant eye on the situation and move faster so that arms cannot travel to the university campus again. They should make periodical searches in the rooms of those students who are suspected of keeping weapons. The university authority should also take strong steps, even should expel the students, if any, who are found possessing deadly arms. If necessary the university should frame new rules and regulations in this respect.

But the most important thing is to stop infiltration of arms into the campus. Here the government, the political parties and all others have a duty to discourage anyone who is inclined to show muscle power in the campus areas. Students have rights to carry on union and even political activities as a conscious section of the society. A brand of healthy politics goes with academic freedom. But none has a right to cause harm to higher education in the country in the name of politics.