

The New Nation

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Raid on campus

VIOLENCE on campus is one of the gravest issues currently facing the nation. The universities have turned into veritable battlegrounds with gun fights, stabbings and bomb explosions becoming a regular feature. Security is gone, academic schedule is in disarray, standard is declining and all this together make up an exact antidote of what may be called academic atmosphere. This is far, far from the kind of political activism one would want the universities to be characterised by. The common student is frustrated, guardians are alarmed. How this came about is an intriguing question. How varsity students come to possess arms is a question that has vexed different quarters for a long time.

After some symptomatic improvement lasting over a year the situation was again deteriorating in recent weeks. In an apparent response to the call from all sections of society to halt further deterioration, the police last Wednesday raided six of the 13 residential halls of the university and recovered a huge quantity of arms and ammunition. More than 30 persons have been arrested.

This police action, though it comes after a long period of drift and indecision, has been widely en-

dorsed. Not that the campuses have been freed of arms and sense of security has returned. People are waiting with their fingers crossed for further action and fuller result.

This is not the occasion for going into details of how politics is contaminated by violence. At this stage we would only say that those who indulge in gun running are usually not fired by any political ideology and do not sincerely espouse any cause. Cash and gangsterism tend to go together. Is it possible to banish musclemanship from campus? Any long term answer to this question should be sought in politics. For the immediate problems of weapons and violence in the campus we can say that if the authorities show sincerity and firmness and pursue their efforts unremittingly, normalcy can return to campus. And it is singularly important that the authorities direct their efforts without prejudice, bias and selectivity. If the idea behind the anti-terrorism drive is to indirectly help a particular group establish a monopoly of terrorism, it will only lead to greater terrorism. Let the past be our guide.

Armed hooliganism is not limited to Dhaka University. Gun running has spread to Chittagong University, Rajshahi University and Jahangirnagar University. The problem assumed such a menacing shape that some time ago Rajshahi University authorities and more recently Dhaka University authorities were

forced to seek police help. The way the students and teachers of Rajshahi University and Jahangirnagar University have made a united move to resist violence on-campus is something to be commended. Our plea to the law enforcing agencies is that their drive should not stop halfway or limit itself to some of the halls and groups.