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CAMPUS UNREST

There seems still to be no solution to the problem of campus unrest in the country. The violence among different student groups has led to the closure of three major universities, including the Dhaka University, and has forced another to the verge of a shutdown. Yet, it is a common belief, and a justified one, that trouble on the different campuses can be eradicated through a sincere desire on the part of all concerned to resolve the issue of unrest among students. Strangely enough, the unrest among students has nothing to do with academic issues, although it is plausible to believe that the congestion, the crowd on the campuses and the lack of facilities for adequate extra-curricular activities, may be partly contributing to the climate that promotes violence on the campuses.

There is concern about the issue among political parties, community leaders, students, teachers and guardians. Everyone is stressing that violence among students has to be eliminated and a congenial climate for education restored. Several Vice Chancellors of the troubled universities expressed concern on Wednesday that no concrete steps had been taken to stop violence on the campuses despite the fact that the problem had been discussed at the highest level, including in the Jatiyo Sangsad, earlier this month. One head of a university had even threatened to resign admitting his failure to restore normal academic atmosphere in his institution.

The continuing trouble on the campuses is costing the nation dearly. Classes cannot be held regularly and therefore the syllabuses of different courses remain incomplete and examinations cannot be held on time. This has led to session jams. The productive time of the students is lost waiting for examinations to take place. Degree courses which are to be completed in three years take double the time and even more. Whole generations are wasted in the process and students who are supposed to pass out of the universities and take responsibility of the nation are seen to loiter on the campuses. The process which is going on in the universities is suicidal for the nation. Before it becomes too late, united efforts have to be made to stem and eliminate violence on the campuses. Students have to be motivated to work hard on their studies and ignore issues which have no concern with their academic life.

The command of the teachers on the student has to be restored. Academic discipline must be established at all costs. When there is a united concern over the issue, there is a likelihood that all will contribute to working out a solution universally acceptable and which will deliver the benefits to the nation. It is apparent that those who are indulging in violence is a minority section among the students. Some of them are not even full time students. They are holding the entire community of students hostage.

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