

২২ & Editorial

Case against DU teachers and students

High time they should be freed

THE detained Dhaka University teachers and students are undergoing a legal process despite the two-week deadline the government had set for their release which expired on December 23. Nearly two weeks have elapsed since then. Their already long period of detention is that much more extended, for how long, nobody can say with any degree of certainty.

One would have expected though, the conciliatory approach adopted between the then education adviser and DU teachers' representatives to complete the legal processes in a fortnight's time to release the detainees would be adhered to. But that was not to be, keeping the university and the guardians at large in a state of tension and animated suspense. One latched on the hope that the time space was required to withdraw the cases which if the government willed could always do.

We have it on the authority of the Vice-chancellor that the cases against the teachers and students will not be withdrawn but rather they will be freed through legal procedures. What the legal steps would be one hasn't got the faintest of idea about. If what happened with the release of the RU teachers with the government claiming that their relatives asked for pardon while the latter saying they only demanded their release is, of course, not a precedent worthy of emulation. For, it created unnecessary hard feeling and controversy among the academics. It has to be avoided this time around in the interest of amicable settlement that generates goodwill on both sides.

In these columns on December 9 we had stated... 'since teachers are a highly respected section of society and have been for ages, it will be injudicious on the part of anyone to expect them as well as all the students detained to give an undertaking before they can be freed'. We reiterate our position here. More so, because at this critical juncture, it is of utmost importance that we maintain social harmony and congenial atmosphere be created before the elections.