

Varsity students' clash

Most unwarranted, most deplorable

THE violent clash that involved the students of two private universities in Dhaka on Saturday leaves one wondering whether the huge amount of money parents are spending on their children for their higher studies are being spent to produce educated youths and future leaders of the country or bunch of vandals that are ready to fall at each other's throats at the flimsiest of excuses. The incident was most unwarranted and most deplorable.

According to reports appearing in this newspaper, students of Prime Asia University and Southeast University located in the Banani area of the capital were involved in pitched battle causing damage to more than 100 vehicles. More than 15 buildings were vandalised by the feuding students. Not only that, being situated right in the heart of a business-cum-residential area with a major road running through it, life was disrupted and traffic held up for several hours, causing immense suffering to the public.

Although no one is sure why it happened, apparently, it all started over alleged stalking of a female student of one university by a male student of the other. Of course stalking is a very serious offence and was quite unheard of in the past, particularly in educational institutions. It is inconceivable that students who are striving to achieve excellence in intellectual fields will stoop so low as to indulge in an act which only the most inebriated ruffians do. Equally reprehensible is the violent reaction that followed. First altercations followed by fistfights and then all-out violence. And what was the fault of the owners whose vehicles were damaged or for that matter why were the buildings and the small shops made targets of anger? And who will compensate their loss?

One would hope that the authorities of both the universities would go into the incident and take steps to ensure that such things were not repeated. And it is not just enough to close down the universities, those responsible for giving the lead must be identified and taken to task, and the loss sustained by the public in terms of damaged property must be made good.