

## Moral failure of Dhaka University authorities

WHILE Dhaka University authorities has done a good job by apparently retracting its decision, on July 11, to impose restrictions on 'outsiders' on the campus, in response to adverse public reactions, they have set up an ugly precedence by making a false statement that they did not make any such decision in the first place. The university authorities unduly blamed a section of 'regular as well as social media' for creating confusion by way of making 'partial presentation' of their first statement made on July 9. The teachers, and that too university teachers, are not expected to take refuge in any falsehood while righting a wrong decision. That they imposed restrictions on the 'outsiders' to enter the campus was unambiguously evident in the text of the university's first release, which claimed that the 'campus is only open to its students' and that 'no outsiders would be allowed to stay or roam about or run any activities without permission from the university authorities'. The authorities made the decision following the brutal attacks of the activists of the Student League, student wing of the ruling Awami League, on the leaders of general students agitating for reforms in the quota system of providing government jobs.

The decision was naturally exposed to public criticism, for the universal concept of a university involves not only imparting knowledge on students, but also generating and disseminating new knowledge through multidimensional research, which, again, involves, along with many other things, the holding of seminars and symposiums attended and participated in by students, teachers, journalists from within and without. The imposition of restrictions on the so-called outsiders, therefore, turns a university campus into a prison. Besides, students of Dhaka University has a great tradition of launching and nurturing social, cultural and political movements for democracy and justice, which had always been successful by the participation of students coming from other educational institutions of the country. Moreover, there are many important organisations such as Bangla Academy, British Council Library, Gurdwara; and on top of those the country's

Central Shahid Minar is located on and around the Dhaka University campus; and, therefore, the Dhaka University authorities cannot ask people not to visit those organisations. Thinking sections of the people have no reason to understand that the authorities made the decision to stand in the way of the student movement seeking reforms in the quota system, instead of demanding justice for the victims of the Student League atrocities.

Nevertheless, the retraction of the decision imposing restrictions on the so-called 'outsiders' in the university campus was a welcome decision. What is, however, unfortunate is while unmaking a wrong decision made two days ago, the Dhaka University authorities have failed to live up to the moral standards they are expected to do. By way of denying that they did not impose any restrictions on non-students to enter the campus and falsely blaming others for distorting the content of the decisions, they have pathetically displayed that they are intellectually incapable of admitting any mistake they make or taking responsibility of any mistake committed by them. This is ominous. The teachers are expected to set examples before the students to stand for the truth. We only hope that the university authorities would realise the mistake and stand by the concept of the universities in the days to come.