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12:00 AM, August 08, 2018 / LAST MODIFIED: 12:57 PM, August 08, 2018

## EDITORIAL

# Why are universities under attack?

*Uphold the sanctity of the places of education*



We deplore the heavy-handed police actions on Monday on the students of several private universities who were protesting against attacks on their peers. Why did police, supplemented by armed goons, fire rubber bullets and tear gas into campuses filled with students leaving scores injured? Can anyone not exercise his or her constitutional right to protest?

The students of several private universities were protesting inside or around their campuses. They clearly did not pose any threat to public safety. We understand the police were not called in by the authorities of those universities either. In fact, one university opened its gate for everyone under attack to take refuge. We, therefore, wonder why such heavy police presence was warranted in a sacrosanct place like a university campus in

the first place. What's more disturbing is the fact that police, reportedly, had sought “assistance” from a pro-ruling party youth organisation to deal with the protests.

We believe the rights to protest and expression are an integral part of democracy. We cannot claim to be a democratic country when citizens are denied a minimum space for expressing their dissent. By handling almost every youth movement, regardless of its legitimacy and rationality, in a ham-fisted manner, the government runs the risk of alienating our young generation.

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