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Editorial

The New Nation

WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 1988

Education the victim

JUST 130 sick examinees. And this too at a semester examination of an educational institution. One can not but look askance at news like this. But in a country where ingenuity makes its marks that do hardly any credit to its people, impossible is a word almost impossible to be found in such areas. Yes, the Ittefaq precisely puts the number of sick examinees appearing for their semester examination from Dhaka Polytechnic Institute, Tejgaon at 130. All these examinees have moreover been huddled into room No 217 with no guards being allowed to oversee their performance in the hall.

The emphatic number could reasonably give one the idea that a viral epidemic has perhaps been responsible for such an unusual number of examinees being taken to sick beds. But the fact that the examinees are busy copying from books and notes they carry with them and also the guards are kept at bay gives the right clue to their sickness. There may be some genuine examinees struck by illness but the fabulous number is indeed dismaying. The rot that started in our education

now seems to be on the look for newer avenues for an alround on slaught to bring about the coup de grace. It is not a sequel to what happened earlier in Tolaram College in Narayanganj or at an examination centre in Comilla. While in Narayanganj it was the student leaders who are to blame for bringing disgrace to the institution in particular and education in general, in Comilla even the outsiders took a free hand in the fray.

Dhaka University has also witnessed similar unruly behaviour by examinees besides the usual scenes of violence. Other universities are no exception. Even BUET known until recently for academic discipline is showing restiveness the manifestation of which takes the form of students boycotting the class tests. The symptoms are all very dangerous. One does not know where all this will lead our education to. Academicians, at least a sizeable portion of them, have expressed their strong resentment at the present system of education. The reason why they disapprove of it is well justified. But at the same time one tends to believe that the small steps aimed to reform the system have not been much welcomed. The reaction of the BUET students is an eloquent testimony to this fact. Even if changes are effected so much so that they delegate much more responsibilities to the

individual institution's authorities, there is little hope that things will turn for the better. What if a majority of them act in a manner the authority of the polytechnic Institute has done. Whether they do so willingly or just out of fear does not make much of a difference. The important thing is that education ultimately becomes the casualty anyway. And this is the greatest ever loss the nation suffers. We can only hope that appropriate measures will be taken to bring an end to these unseemly practices before embarking on any reform programmes on education. No system can work when honesty is made disproportionately large by its conspicuous absence from life, let alone academic part of it. It is difficult to find an answer to this but to save us from the degeneration we must have one.