

## PEACE IN THE CAMPUSES

The Dhaka University campus was rocked by violent gun battles in recent weeks. The troubles in the university were so serious that the authorities were obliged to close down the institution for a spell in order to prevent further deterioration of the situation. The student activists of the opposition BNP had called strikes to protest the incidents in the university. Finally, the two main opposing groups agreed to restore peace in the campus and Dhaka University was reopened.

Dhaka University is the biggest as well as the most prestigious of our academic institutions. With its smooth functioning is linked not only the future of thousands of promising young ones, but also the developmental and all other aspirations of the country. A country's leading educational institutions are supposed to be wombs which give birth to nation builders. With the wombs decapitated, the nation builders are hardly likely to emerge to the great misfortune of the nation. These worries have been expressed time and again, but with new effect. Today, not only the Dhaka University but also a number of educational institutions are experiencing disturbances. This is not at all a desirable situation.

It was good to see that the different combatant groups in the Dhaka University could work out an agreement between themselves and the same addressed the major causes of campus turmoil such as the presence of outsiders in students' dormitories, unauthorised arms, campus policing etc. But it has been reported that no sooner that this understanding was created that moves started afresh to violate the same. The residential halls were vacated under the agreement and re-occupation of the halls carried out under the close supervision of the student bodies and the university administration. The same created hope that peace in the Dhaka University campus is not impossible given the sincerity and cooperation of all. But it has been reported that outsiders are once again infiltrating the halls not openly, but indirectly. But the same amounts to violation of the understanding and before long the situation which led to the recent closure of the university might be repeated.

There is no substitute to taking stronger actions to restore tranquillity in the country's academic institutions. All the experiences over the years clearly showed that patchwork attempts at campus normalcy are not sustainable. Sooner rather than later the issues of campus politics will have to be addressed by our national leaderships and this is an endeavour in which all must make a contribution. Some may say that the government can unilaterally take action in this sphere to be emulated by all. This prescription sounds fine in theory, but is hardly realistic. A good example certainly creates the moral compulsion on non-adherents, but it is unlikely that such moral persuasions would be enough to bring about similar gestures from all.

But the situation in our campuses begs urgent redress actions. The campuses are our hopes for the future. The campuses, must therefore, be normalised and the national leaderships must come round to playing their part at the soonest in this regard.