

Campus Violated Again

DHAKA University has once again hogged the headlines for the wrong reason. This time around a student paid the price for raising his voice against acts of terrorism. His inclination towards righteousness led to bloody consequences. He was stabbed once in his room at the Surya Sen Hall and then when he was being taken to the hospital, and is now fighting for his life at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Silver-lining around an otherwise gruesome incident was immediate and definitive action — temporary expulsion of the seven involved in the brutal act — by the university authorities. Also, spontaneous assemblage of general students demanding punishment for the perpetrators suggests that they have risen to their responsibilities towards curbing terrorism on the campus. However, it is a pity that another brutal violation of individual rights had to engineer such an awakening.

Terrorism on the campus has become emblematic of the country's oldest and most prestigious educational institution over the years. While there has been an endless sequence of violent violation of student rights, authorities have proved ineffectual, if not indifferent. Probe committees and their reports have failed to bring about any change. On the other hand, instead of co-operating in the efforts towards a violence-free campus, the country's political leaders have, directly or indirectly, encouraged terrorism. Prime Minister's public utterance that terrorists have no party has proved to be nothing but mere rhetoric. Leader of the Opposition has not helped, either, purportedly inducting musclemen into the central committee of her student wing. As a result, tone and tenor of things on the campus have remained largely partisan.

The fast aggravating situation certainly calls for assertion of power from the university authorities. Mere academic ranking of the university will not mean anything until and unless peaceful environment is ensured on the campus. Saturday's episode suggests that they have finally realised that. We affirm our support to the vice-chancellor and his administration, and solicit the government to lend its support to the crusade against violence and terrorism.