



DUCSU ELECTIONS

Any major event in Dhaka University, the nation's premier seat of higher learning, sends ripples far beyond its physical boundaries. Elections to the university's Central Students Union and its thirteen halls held on February 8 after seven long years were one such event and drew a good deal of attention. Participation by all student groups, lively campaigns and peaceful polling raised hopes in many minds that unmitigated blessings would accrue from the elections. But the post-election anarchy which claimed one life and caused the classes to be suspended threatens to pollute the campus (and perhaps politics outside).

There was a triangular contest in the elections. The 13-member Chhatra Sangram Parishad, which got support from the Awami League-led eight-party alliance and the five-party alliance, swept DUCSU and secured overwhelming majority in most of the hall unions. Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the student wing of the BNP, captured two hall unions and shared positions in four others. Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, did not get any seat. The results of the elections are not, however, our subject.

It is painful for us not to be able to congratulate the university authorities and the students for successful completion of the whole course of the elections. For any election to have beneficial impact, universal acceptance of its verdict is as important as the holding of the election itself. From our own experience we know that if powerful quarters refuse to honour the verdict of an election then that election may create more problems than solving any. Ominous signs are there that the university elections may not succeed in creating a healthy atmosphere in the campus if corrective measures are not taken promptly.

It's no use apportioning blame. There is need for all concerned to look into the whole episode dispassionately. Certain questions, however, deserve close scrutiny. First, what was the compulsion of the university authorities to relax regulations and go out of the way for regularising admission of old and irregular students? Second, what is the import of direct involvement of the political parties in the affairs of student politics? Third, must student politics be polarised in line with national politics? Last but not the least, how judicious was it to ask the police to withdraw from election-duty on February 9?

110