

Narayanganj teacher humiliation a dangerous trend

THE public humiliation of the headteacher of Piyar-Sattar Latiff High School in Narayanganj is, indeed, a shame. According to a New Age report on Wednesday, local people organised through an announcement from a local mosque using its public address system that the teacher made derogatory remarks against religion made him do sit-ups by holding the ears on May 13 after beating him up. What is more shameful is that all this took place in the presence of the local lawmaker who, tied to the Jatiya Party though, has ruling Awami League clout. It has been alleged that the teacher made the offensive remarks while meting out corporal punishment to a student of the school on May 8. Brushing aside the allegation of making any remarks that would hurt religious sentiment, the headteacher, however, said that the mob was provoked by a group of teachers of the school and some local people who were conspiring to make him quit the job as he used to refuse to accept their illegal proposals while conducting the school. Meanwhile, in another controversial move, the school managing committee suspended the headteacher, who has now been receiving treatment in a local hospital since the heinous torture on him took place, on charge of perpetrating, among others, the above-mentioned crimes.

This is not the first time that a teacher has been humiliated by people belonging to the ruling party or its allies. One can recall here the incident in which a number of teachers in Shahjalal University of Science and Technology were dragged and assaulted by a group of ruling party-backed Chhatra League leaders and activists in August 2015 triggering public protests across the country. Another group from the same student outfit in Islamic University in Kushtia earlier humiliated a group of teachers in almost the same manner. But the manner in which the teacher in question, who belongs to the Hindu community, has been humiliated after false allegations of undermining Islam levelled against him certainly shows a more alarming trend. In the first place, such incidents are detrimental to communal harmony that has evolved here over centuries and is crucial for progress, economic and social in particular. Besides, the incident may endanger the safety and security of not only the teacher but also the entire family as seen in the case of the Tangail Hindu tailor who was hacked to death allegedly by an extremist group on charge of humiliating Islam just the other day, an allegation forthrightly denied by him and his family though. According to media reports, there is now a huge sense of insecurity in the family of the slain tailor.

Overall, the government needs to look into the matter seriously. It immediately needs to ensure exemplary punishment, particularly in compliance with the demands raised by those protesting against the mayhem, for the perpetrators following a credible and acceptable investigation. It is all the more important to prevent any recurrence of such heinous incidents. Conscious sections of society also need to continue with their ongoing protests against the humiliation of the teacher for all this happen.