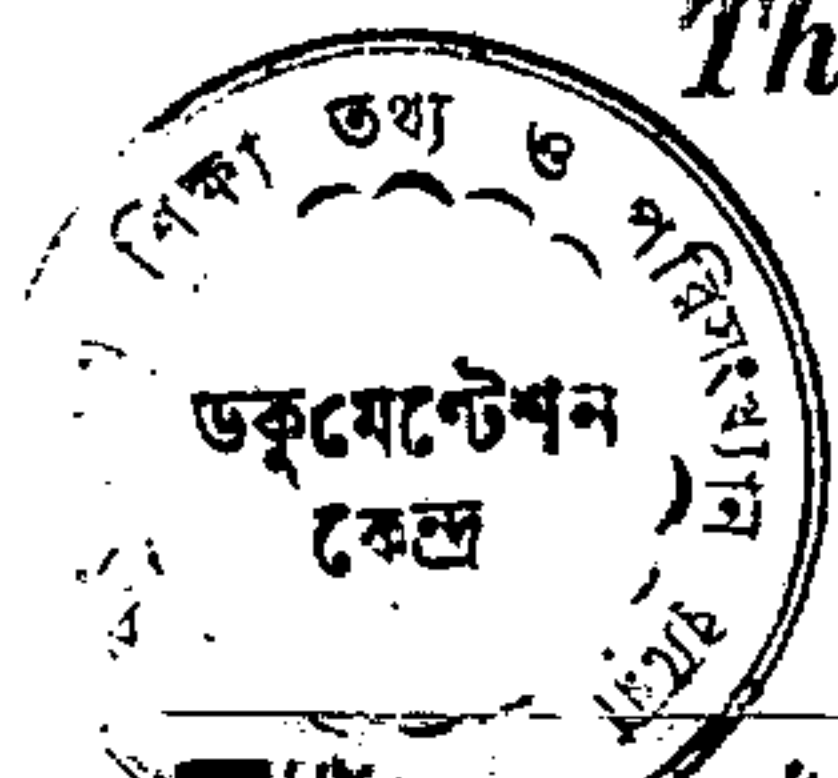


25 DEC 1988



### Freeing education

YET another teacher, a headmaster to be precise, has been beaten but this time not by students as usually happens. The offender in question is vice-president of the management committee of Shahatali High School in Chandpur, Abdur Razzak Tarafdar who also happens to be the chairman of Shah Mahmudpur union. It is perhaps this latter position of his that has encouraged him to be bold enough to venture in to the headmaster's room with his stooges and act in such a base manner. Still reason dictates that this locality should have given him the least cause for acting so nastily and unlawfully whatever were the headmaster's faults. The headmaster is however guilty of protesting the use of school fund by the chairman in his own sweet will as well as his interference in the school administration. The chairman did not like the challenge to his larger than life authority and accordingly met it with the muscle power at his command—a practice whose incidence is rising at an ever increasing pace in the country. This may have varied manifestations like the one in which the principal of Edward College, Pabna along with the members of his family was abducted or the other where a lady teacher was manhandled elsewhere by one of her colleagues. Even in this city proper a headmaster is threatened because he did not

comply with requests for sending up students, who failed test examination, to S.S.C. examination centre. The underlying theme in all these incidents is one of gradual slide in the sanctity of all institutions, but more particularly those in which education figures as the number one dispensation.

Most people express surprise and concern to see the deterioration in the academic atmosphere. But education is made the main target, or so it seems, because this decidedly is the true reflection of a society with the myriads of vicissitudes continuously changing its complexion. It is not the lack of material resources that truly makes an individual or a nation poor but lack of education or even one that is ill can bring about allround poverty which proves dangerous. There is little scope for an argument in the line whether it was the egg or the hen first. As for an individual or a nation it is always education that must come first or at least it should be considered second to none. But all the goings-on in the area of education inexorably lead the nation to a precipitous point from where a return to sanity is not only impossible but a headlong fall is inevitable.

The chairman from Comilla perhaps never considered that it was not his ego or sham authority that was really important. He represents an institution and the headmaster also does the same in an area where

he has no business to meddle except in a limited sense as provided by the rights of his being the vice-president of the management committee. As it appears the way the chairman spent money was not in the best of the school's interest. In case of disagreement on any matter concerning the expenditure of school fund there are lawful methods to arrive at a decision. Instead of taking a recourse to this, the chairman has first of all committed an offence and by assaulting the headmaster he has been guilty of double crimes. He is also the cause of the humiliation of a man who commands respect from all in the society. The people of the locality have protested the chairman's awful musclemanny. But that is not enough. The chairman, who has undermined educational institution, should be given exemplary punishment—more so because he has further brought disgrace to the institution he represents. If his administration is not culpable of anything, it has at least polluted the atmosphere of education there and that is the case from primary schools to universities. The meddling some politics is now taking its toll. One is not correct even to suggest that these institutions, particularly the higher ones, be let alone. To do this there should be a general consensus that under no circumstances will be resorted to by anyone.