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Editorial

The New Nation

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Education—a glimpse

CLASSES are held very irregularly in about 30 per cent of the primary schools in the greater Barisal district. So much so that a correspondent of a leading national daily, after an extensive tour of the schools of the area, has written, perhaps in disgust, that no classes are indeed held in those schools. The incontrovertible fact seems to be the situation is really bad in the primary schools down there. This is painful if only because Barisal used to be our most education-oriented region, save Pargana Bikrampur, having the rare distinction of being literally infested with schools.

One device of shirking classes by school administrations is the very strange decision to hold morning schools without there being any reason whatsoever to justify that. But the recalcitrant top brass of those schools can indeed seek very good refuge behind the long-standing practice in the Bangladesh Secretariat. There can, of course, be no dismissing of the dangerous parallel between the two cases—no one turning up before eight in the morning and no one staying back after

one in the afternoon in the seven-to-two business of both the cases.

We have much to redress and fashion in the matter of the content of our primary and secondary level education as also the mode and quality of instruction in the classroom. The pedagogical standard, in short, must have a radical face-lift—and soon. But even long before that one small big thing must be ensured—an enrolment pattern tending to reach the saturation point, and two—that classes are held fairly regularly in all the schools—in accordance with the calendar set by the educational authority and routine worked out by the school themselves.

Only the other day the premier educational institution of the district—the B.M. College—celebrated a hundred years of its founding. Not many a college in our country can pride itself with such a feat. And in this it was wholly a matter of society—and not government—doing unto itself what must be done. For close on to eighty years B.M. College—starting from the endowments of its founders, the illustrious Aswini Kumar Dutta and his father Birja Mohan Dutta to wit—ran wholly on benefactions by private individuals. And no doubt the college imparted the very best of education by our national standard.

Procedural and administrative

strictness is well in order if institutionalised malingering and shirking has to be curbed. But that perhaps cannot play the whole trick. Society at large must be involved in matters educational. The common man in that region has a very helpful and encouraging disposition towards education, perhaps a result of the tradition of having schools in every village. This must be encouraged to exert a good influence on at least say the conduct of the primaries. The spirit behind the school movement in Barisal and behind the B.M. College saga must be cultivated to help Barisal's basic education situation to come out of the woods.