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Cadet College Tragedy

Iqbal and Reza, two cadets of Class VII in Sylhet Cadet College, were crushed to death last Thursday as they slipped accidentally under the heavy iron roller that was being manually pulled across the playground by the cadets, under instructions, reportedly given by the physical training instructor. This was contrary to college rules, according to officials in the institutions, some of whom are said to have cautioned the trainer against using the young scholars on the job of preparing the college grounds for an upcoming athletics event.

As reports go, the instructor in question did not heed the warning, and the result was the lives of two youngsters, who under the rules of training that would-be military men received, were denied the right to say 'no' even to wrong and brutal orders for whoever happens to be in command. It is all part of the dehumanising rigours that trainees are made to suffer, supposedly to make them fit to defend the country, once they graduated from these cadet colleges and went on to join the military academy.

But the question is, could not discipline and dutifulness be taught without recourse to brutal ways? Boys are normally enrolled into cadet colleges in class VII, which means the two dead children were mere novices in the rough-an-tough world of the college and should have been under close supervision of their mentors before compelling them to do chores that adults would balk at.

The instructor in this case can be said to have blood on his hands in being a cruel slave driver with the children rather than a humane supervisor.

It is unthinkable that men with such a mind-set got hired by the college authorities to handle young people who are fresh from their mother's lap, as it were. A more enlightened college would have seen to it that their staff are 'emotionally literate' enough to interact with their wards as mentally sound human beings and not as mindless morons.

The adjutant and instructor of the college have been suspended and the boys sent home, in an attempt to overcome the terrible tragedy. Enquiries are also underway. We hope this will serve as a hard lesson for all. The military-mind-manufacturers must understand that they need to humanize their mode of instructions sooner than later. Such tragedies must never happen again.