

Teachers Under Attack

A school teacher has been hacked to death in Kushtia and the principal of a college of Tangail town survived an attempt on his life. Both the dastardly acts were carried out a week ago as reported by a Bangla daily of Dhaka. It is not for the first time that teachers have come under physical attack. We do not say that all the teachers of the country are faithful to their profession and behave themselves in a manner to make their profession sacrosanct. At times some of them give a poor account of themselves—so poor that they rank equally with any other criminal of society. So the point is not that teachers will be totally immune from bodily attacks when murder and violence are an everyday affair in the country. The point, rather, is that people involved in this noble profession still command respect of the kind few professions do. And the social order simply becomes upset when even a veteran principal of Ahmedul Huq's—on whose life an attempt was made—stature is not spared.

That two similar incidents of attack on teachers took place on the same day may be just a coincidence but they may as well be symptomatic. Either teacher is increasingly becoming politicised or respect for the profession is making way for something less hallowed but more sinister. Teachers who want to stand their ground more firmly than those who are compromising their status in the face of intimidation or for less elevating reasons decidedly make enemies. After all, when money can buy educational certificates and even so-called education, teachers unwilling to compromise are likely to draw the wrath of the rogue students. Teachers on invigilation duty in examination halls are specially vulnerable to such attacks if they disapprove of the various unfair means adopted by students there.

In a society where teachers are so undermined and intimidated, the future of the young generation is definitely suspect. Sometimes rogue students get the encouragement and even support from their guardians and political patrons. Politics has a strange veneration for muscle power of the parties' young cadres. Whether we admit it or not, we live in a culture of violence—one that was once foreign to our nature. The harder truth is that educational institutions, particularly the highest seats of learning have become the breeding grounds of such violence. We therefore know why teachers are subjected to physical violence. Let society decide the future shape of our teacher-student education-society relationship. Our level of civilization will be determined by this equation.