

Humiliation of teacher criminal offence: Anisul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leaders, students of universities and colleges, and different organisations yesterday joined the protest against humiliation of a schoolteacher in public in Narayanganj for his alleged derogatory comments on religion.

They demanded exemplary punishment for the perpetrators.

While talking to reporters after a programme in the capital, Law Minister Anisul Huq strongly condemned the humiliation of Shyamal Kanti Bhakta, headmaster of Piya Sattar Latif High School in Bandar area, who was beaten up by a mob and forced to do squats holding his ears in presence of local Jatiya Party MP Selim Osman on Friday.

It is "an offence under the penal code", the minister said.

The people involved must be punished since taking the law into own hands cannot be tolerated, he said.

AL joint general secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif called upon Selim Osman to apologise to the nation and the teacher.

Addressing a programme in Mirpur, Hanif said, "I don't understand, how he [Selim Osman] could do this."

"I don't know whether that MP [Selim Osman] felt ashamed of his deeds. Not only as an MP, but also as a citizen, I am very much ashamed and sorry for the incident."

The cross-section under the banner of writers-artists-cultural activists yesterday demonstrated at the capital's Shahbagh demanding exemplary punishment for Selim Osman and his aides.

Faizul Hakim Lala, general secretary of Jatiya Mukti Council, demanded that Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid resign for "failure" to protect the honour of teachers.

Fahmidul Haq, associate professor of the mass communication and journalism department at Dhaka University, said, "We are now living in a society where punishment is awarded to the victims, not to the perpetrators."

Our correspondent from Sylhet reported that the general

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students of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology yesterday formed a human chain holding their ears and stood there for half an hour in the rain around 11:30am near the library building for "saying sorry to the teacher".

"We can't bear the shame of seeing the humiliation of a teacher -- the teacher who taught us in our childhood," said Jahangir Noman, a student of the university.

"We are ashamed. This is not only a protest, it is a token of apology to our teacher," he said.

Legal aid and rights organisation Ain o Salish Kendra issued a statement, saying such disgraceful behaviour with a teacher was not acceptable in a civilised society.

ASK demanded that the authorities concerned and law enforcement agency take lawful actions against the persons involved after a fair investigation.

In a statement, the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association yesterday demanded exemplary punishment to the perpetrators after investigation.

The whole nation is shocked and ashamed, the association said, urging all involved including Selim Osman to apologise in public. "The teaching community will not accept anything else," the release added.