

Teachers' torture of eight-year-old

Enforcement of HC verdict overdue

It has been seven years since the High Court in a landmark judgement banned corporal punishment in education institutions in Bangladesh. Yet, the normalisation of the saying "spare the rod, spoil the child" persists among not only teachers in our society, but across the spectrum of our population. This Sunday, we reported the arrest of two female teachers of a *madrasah* for whipping an eight-year-old student 160 times and inserting needles under her nails. We commend the fact that cases were filed against the teachers and the *madrasah* superintendent. That such horrific torture of students by teachers continues speaks volume about the implementation of the HC ruling.

That children in this country are subject to violence is beyond doubt. Since the death of 13-year-old Rajon in 2015, we have seen one case after another. There were the 2016 murders of 13-year-old Rakib and 10-year-old Sagar; both through torture in some inhumane way for some alleged petty "crime". This month we witnessed the torture on Aduri and Sabina, two minor house helps, and the beating of a seven-year-old boy after tying him to a tree. Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) reports that between January to June this year, there have been 143 cases of violence against children—these are only the cases which were reported by the media. Of these, 41 cases were regarding children tortured by their teachers.

We cannot make the country safe for children unless the commitment to ban corporal punishment is strictly enforced. Keeping the schools accountable, through monitoring cells or otherwise, could be a possible way forward. The use of violence as disciplining methods enforces and perpetuates this social disease. If teachers teach children that violence is justified, we are in for a sorry future indeed.