

# Call for life term for rape accused



Protesters take out the rally in Tura on Tuesday.  
Picture by Saidul Khan

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**Tura, Oct. 4:** A conglomeration of civil groups and people today took out a rally here demanding exemplary punishment for two rape-accused teachers — Yogesh Joshi and Deepiyoti Das.

On September 3, two girls were allegedly drugged and raped at Joshi's official quarters where he had invited them to celebrate his birthday along with a few other boys. Joshi and Das allegedly continued to blackmail, molest and abuse the girls.

Joshi, who was the acting principal of the school, was

suspended, while Das who was working on contractual basis, has been sacked. Joshi and Das, who are in police custody, will be produced in court tomorrow to seek extension.

The rally also sought punishment for CRPF commandant R.K. Behara who had allegedly attempted to whisk the teachers away when angry students closed the school gate.

South Tura legislator John Leslee K. Sangma condemned the incident and demanded the accused teachers and CRPF commandant should be given exemplary punishment.

The commandant has de-

nied the allegations.

The rallyists demanded the accused should be given life imprisonment.

Several speakers said the clarification given by Behara was not acceptable. An FIR has been filed by some parents in Tura police station alleging that Behara had forced children to massage his head. Behara's daughter is also a student in the same school.

"We will continue to protest against the rapist teachers until justice is served," said Sengbath Marak, general secretary of the A'chik Youth Welfare Organisation.

The speakers also urged the Tura Bar Association not to take up their case. "We will strongly oppose any move to bail out the accused teachers," said Pritam Marak, president of the Federation of Khasi, Jaintia and Garo People.

The protesters also demanded the setting up of child protection cells in all schools in Garo hills.

"Our rally is not intended to hurt the sentiments of teachers. But we are voicing our anger against the accused rapists and CRPF commandant," said Tengsak Momin, president of the Garo Students Union.