

# 21 schools in Nilphamari still struggle to get back normalcy

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Twenty-one educational institutions in Dimla and Jaldhaka upazilas of the district are still struggling to restore normalcy, two years after Jamaat-Shibir men wreaked havoc on those, in desperate bid to resist the 10th parliamentary elections on January 5 in 2014.

The institutions, including 14 primary schools, four high schools and three madrasas are conducting regular classes as the government provided financial and technical support for the purpose.

But most of them are still facing difficulties as official records like old registers containing SSC certificates of students and MPO sheets and service books of teachers and other staff were burnt to ashes.

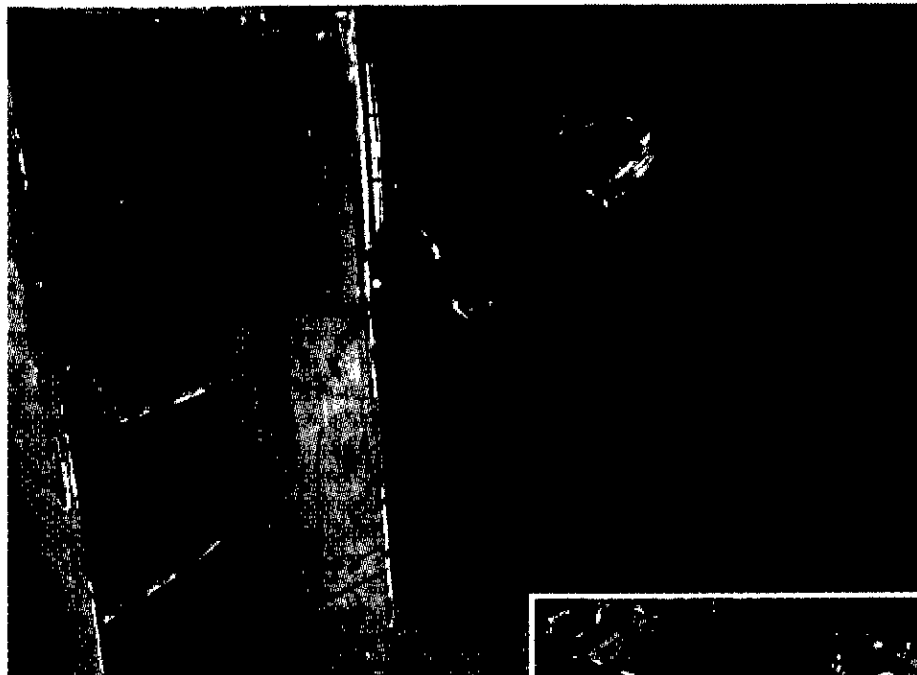
There are still complications regarding drawing of salaries due to the situation.

Science students are the most sufferers as laboratory apparatuses of those schools are either burnt or looted.

Visiting badly affected Satjan High School in Dimla upazila on Monday noon, it was found that students gathered at the school ground as new books were being distributed.

Repair for the structural damage has been done with Tk 12.5 lakh allocated by the government, said advocate Nurul Islam, president of the school managing committee (SMC).

"We had a school library with 2,000 books and a rich science laboratory but the attackers destroyed both.



FILE PHOTO: STAR

**Office documents and other valuable equipment of Satjan High School in Dimla upazila under Nilphamari district got destroyed as Jamaat-Shibir men set fire to the school that served as a polling centre for the parliamentary elections of January 5 in 2014.**



The two important set-ups are yet to be reopened. Many students left the school amid the frustrating situation," he said.

Recalling the horrifying incident, Islam said, "About 100-150 miscreants attacked the school around 9:30pm on the night before the 10th parliamentary election when the presiding and polling officers of the centre went to my nearby house to take dinner."

Miscreants snapped the power line and spread petrol at every corner of the school and set fire to it, making everything burnt into ashes, he lamented.

Class X students of the school Milon Huq, Bikash and Kozoli Rani said their teachers worked day and night to remove wreckages

and moved door to door of former students to collect old textbooks for giving to the students.

"We had arranged imparting lessons through multi-media with two desktop computers, one laptop, one projector and one digital screen but all the equipment along with valuable apparatus in our science laboratory got destroyed in the arson attack," said Nazrul Islam, headmaster of the school.

Dilruba Begum, headmaster of Phutanir Haat Government Primary School in Dimla, and Sirajul Islam, headmaster of Bogulagari Government Primary School of Jaldhaka, said they continued classes despite facing untold difficulties due to devastation by attackers.

The 21 educational institutions in the district suffered a total loss of about Tk 1 crore, District Education Officer Shafiqul Islam said, adding that normal academic atmosphere has greatly revived with the government's financial and technical help.

In connection with the massive vandalism, 21 cases were filed accusing around 3,000 named and unnamed people and police so far arrested several hundred people but most of them got bail from the court, said Senior Additional Superintendent of Police Zakaria Rahman.

"We are paying special attention to the cases so that the culprits are brought to book," he added.