

# chool field leased for market



A school playground in Shialkhowa village under Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila has been leased out for setting up a haat (rural market), angering students, teachers and guardians.

Shialkhowa Government Primary School and Shialkhowa School and College share the same campus and playground in the village. There are also three other kindergarten schools and a madrasa nearby. Over 1,000 students of all these five educational institutions play in this ground.



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The ground was previously used for setting up haat for years before it was freed from occupation last year. Locals expressed concern that if the haat is set up on the ground again, children will be deprived of sports activities.

"If the haat is set up in the playground ignoring our demand for conducive environment in the educational institutions, we will form a movement," said Noor Islam, a parent.

"We want to play on the school ground. It cannot be used as a marketplace," said Saiful Islam, a 10th-grader.

Asadul Haque Hiru, leesees of Shialkhowa Haat, claimed that the ground was used for setting up the market for years, adding that most locals want the haat to be set up on the field.

"I paid Tk 98 lakh to the government to take lease of Shialkhowa Haat," he said.

Kasem Ali, headteacher of Shialkhowa Government Primary School, said schoolgrounds cannot be turned to marketplaces.

Lalmonirhat district education officer Mujibur Rahman and primary education officer Liton Das both agreed that the playground will be used only for sports activities of students.

Jakiya Sultana, UNO of Kaliganj, said a decision will be taken by prioritising the educational environment, while they are looking for an alternative location for the haat.