

Delay in school building repairs might be telling on students

THE closure of at least 1,571 primary and secondary schools because of flooding in 41 districts in Bangladesh's north and north-east is worrying in that this is harming the education of thousands of students, many of whom are scheduled to take the Primary Education Completion and Junior School Certificate examinations scheduled for November. While schools that have gone under water are holding no classes, some other institutions cannot hold academic activities because they are being used as flood shelters. Reports from field, as New Age reported on Sunday, have forecast the closure of more schools as more areas having schools are about to be flooded. With the possibilities for more schools going under floodwater, and being damaged because of this, and some others coming to be used as flood shelters, the number of students who may have their education hampered could be greater. While many students will have lost their books, many of the schools may be in need of heavy repairs. Such a situation calls out the government working out an effective plan to mitigate the losses that the students could have.

Managers of national education are reported to have already asked for reports from the field on damaged schools. It is hoped that once the flooding is over, the students who will have lost their books could be provided with new sets, as directors general of both secondary and higher education and primary education said. But the most important task that remains for the government is to speedily restore the academic environment to the schools, flooded, damaged or being used as flood shelters. Mid-term examinations in many of the schools are already reported to have been rescheduled. If the school buildings and the academic environment cannot be restored early, the students will suffer more even after the flooding is over. Post-flooding, as it has been earlier seen, such jobs take time. Managers of national education need to be earnest about it, especially in view of the fact that many of the students would be taking the Primary Education Completion and Junior School Certification examinations. As these are competitive examinations, any delay in the restoration of academic environment would hit them hard. Besides, the government might need to arrange for additional classes for them so that their course could be completed. The government also need to attend to other issues, the rehabilitation of the flood victims that is. Even if the students are provided with new books, the damaged school buildings are expeditiously repaired and arrangement for additional classes is made in-time, it is highly unlikely that the students from such families could be attending classes and be attentive to their studies if families of the students are not given the proper relief materials and are not properly rehabilitated.

The government, in the situation, must look into all these issues and work out a plan in advance so that as soon as flooding improves, students can get back to their usual duty without any hassles.

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