

School or cattle shed?

KONGKON KARMAKER, *Dinajpur*

The only primary school at Tejonandi village in Naogaon's Atrai upazila has turned into a cattle shed as classes at the institution remained stopped for long in absence of teachers.

Local residents Mosaraf Hossain, Foez Uddin, Ranjit Kumar Sarker and Nazma Begum in 1990 founded Tejonandi Primary School, which was nationalised in 2012. The founders jointly donated 13.2 kathas of land for the school.

The school started functioning with some 100 students and continued academic activities for 18 years when a tornado hit the institution and damaged it badly in 2008, said villagers.

After the heavy storm, the teachers tried to rebuild the school, but failed due to shortage of fund, they said. Later, students of the school got admitted to other schools.

Rafiqul Islam, a resident of the village, said most parents send their children to Boithakhali Government Primary School and Shridhal-Gurunoi Government Primary School, which are two km away and the children need to cross a river.

The school was established in the village to ease the suffering of the children but it is very sad that the suffering is back again, said Mosharaf Hossain, one of the founders.

In 2013, local lawmaker Israfil Alam donated Tk 51 lakh for constructing the school building. The contractor handed over the building to Education Engineering Department in the district.

"After that, villagers saw a ray of hope that the school will start functioning again but uncertainties loomed over reopening the school as no teachers have been recruited here till now," said Ranjit Kumar, a founding teacher of the school.

In absence of academic activities at the school, the villagers found the school as a safe house for domestic animals, including cows and goats, said Md Babu, a local of the area.

The beautiful school building has now turned into a dirty place, he said.

Atrai Upazila Education Officer Roksana Anisa said the government is yet to appoint any teacher for Tejonandi Government Primary School.

She hopes that the activities of the school will resume next year as they have requested the higher authorities to restart the school.



Villagers of Tejonandi in Naogaon's Atrai upazila turn Tejonandi Government Primary School into a cattle shed as classes at the school have remained stopped for long in absence of teachers.

PHOTO: STAR