

# Education comes to a halt

*623 pry and high schools in 5 dists of Rangpur region remain submerged for a month; 100 more under threat of river erosion*

KONGKON KARMAKER, from Dinajpur

Academic activities at 623 primary and high schools in Rangpur region have been suspended for more than a month due to flooding caused by heavy rainfall and an onrush of water from the upstream, said education officials.

Of them, 562 are government primary schools and 61 high schools in five districts -- Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha and Nilphamari, they said, adding that the number of students of these schools were more than 200,000.

Of the 562 primary schools affected by flooding, at least eight are in Pirkachha, Gangachara and Kaunia upazila of Rangpur district; 380 in Kurigram Sadar, Ulipur, Chilmari,

Nageshwari, Rajarhat, Roumari, Phulbari, Bhurungamari and Rajibpur upazila of Kurigram; 126 in Gaibandha district; and 14 schools in Lalmonirhat district.

Two primary schools in Nilphamari district are flooded and under the threat of being devoured by river any time.

Thirty-two primary schools in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Gaibandha districts have been suspended as these are being used as shelter place for the flood affected people.

Mahbub Elahi, deputy director of the Directorate of Primary Education office in Rangpur region, said his office is working to assess primary schools that suffered structural damage in

flood, and those on the verge of being devoured by rivers.

His office would write to ministry soon on completion of the assessment, he said.

However, the activities of a few schools had started last week, according to the education officials.

Teachers of the primary schools in those areas where flood water has receded have been instructed to restart the academic activities as soon as possible and help their students make up the lost classes, Mahbub Elahi added.

In addition, more than 100 government primary schools and high schools in the five districts of the region are under threat of river erosion.

According to the education officials,

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54 primary schools in Rangpur region were devoured by Teesta, Dharla, Brahmaputra rivers in the last 10 years.

Meanwhile, Azahar Ali, inspector of secondary and higher secondary education in Rangpur region, said classes of 61 high schools in the region, have been suspended due to the flood and threat of river erosion.

Of the schools, 37 are in Kurigram, three in Lalmonirhat, 20 in Gaibandha, and one in Gangachara upazila of Rangpur.

These schools will be opened as soon as the situation gets normal, he added.