

No school buildings for students for three years!

When will they be rebuilt?

It is a shame that students of nine government primary schools in Jhenidah are being compelled to attend classes under the open skies or in makeshift huts, as their school buildings were deemed "too risky" and abandoned three years ago. Our report states that after the Rana Plaza collapse in April 2013, an inquiry team consisting of officials of LGED and the Education Office, inspected schools in the district and served notices to nine at-risk school buildings. It was a laudable and timely initiative, no doubt, to identify unsafe buildings and save students' lives, but what we are at a loss to understand is why no attempts have been made by the authorities since then to move the students to a safer location (i.e. another building) or make renovations to the existing building to make it compliant with the safety codes.

Three years is too long a time for students to make do with no building, and to study out in the open or dilapidated provisional structures braving unfavourable weather conditions. It is no surprise that the number of students in these schools is declining each year, with teachers fearing that their schools will have to be shut down unless they are allotted a new building.

It is appalling that the elected representatives of the concerned upazilas have ignored this pressing issue for so long. We urge the UNOs of the concerned upazilas, the MP of the district and the education ministry to sanction new buildings for these students without any bureaucratic delay. A safe physical space for students where they can concentrate on their studies is the least we can guarantee for our future generation.