

# Classrooms risky, primary school students study in fear

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For many young students in Chapainawabganj, attending primary school is a risky business.

Many school buildings feature worn-out roofs, falling plaster and wall cracks, a state of disrepair that leaves students with one eye on textbooks and another on the building around them, fearful of sudden accident. Of 212 government primary school buildings in Sadar upazila, a total of 26 are classified as risky according to the upazila's primary education office.

"I'm really worried about my

child," says one guardian whose son is a student of Gonka Government Primary in Chapainawabganj town. "He doesn't want to attend classes because of the risky classroom. If classes continue to be held in that old building then how will my son ever concentrate on his study?"

Gonka Government Primary School runs classes in two shifts and employs six teachers to cater to around 182 students. It is housed in a one-storied building constructed in 1963. To observe the school's seven rooms is to see plaster fallen off, exposed rusty rods, rising damp

on the walls and dilapidated ceilings. No repair schedule has ever been maintained.

"We have no option but to hold classes in the risky building," says Osman Goni, a teacher at the school. But the structure's condition makes many students as well as teachers afraid, not surprising since chunks of plaster often fall from the ceiling.

The school's head teacher Johra Khatun says Local Government Engineering Department officials visited the school three years ago and declared one of the rooms abandoned back then.

Nowadays all of the rooms are unfit for classes due to cracks developed in the roof. "I have submitted a written petition to the upazila nirbahi officer and primary education officer in this regard," she says.

The upazila's primary education officer Shamim Ahmed Khan agrees they have been informed about the state of the building at the school. "Our office has already sent a proposal to the Local Government Engineering Department to either repair or construct new buildings at all 26 of the upazila's risky primary school sites."