



This photo, left, taken in 2007 shows a cloud of smog over the school making a bright sunny day overcast. The file photo on the right, also taken in 2007, shows children in a classroom of Bakchar Govt Primary School wearing facemasks to help ease breathing difficulties in the dense smog. PHOTO: FILE

# SCHOOL OF POISON

## Smog thins, but not enough

PINAKI ROY

The eagerly awaited recess bell finally rang and the children ran out of the classrooms in joy. Some boys started playing cricket on the school premises, while some of the girls immediately walked to the pickle vendor. Others were watching the game and chatting.

But the environment was not as good as the joyous break of a children's school looked. The premises were foggy and the day seemed cloudy. It was not usual winter fog but the industrial smogs coming out from nearby re-rolling mills.

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Students of Bakchar Govt Primary School still go to school through the smog as the government has failed to do enough to improve the situation. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# School of poison

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Despite repeated reports there is no significant change in the situation of Bakchar Govt Primary School. Once most of the students used to attend classes wearing masks and now they don't wear it any more.

The truth is the polluted smogs are still choking the school and the residential areas around. Asked about the situation, Md Sirajuddin, the newly appointed headmaster who joined the school six months ago, said, "The situation has improved." He said he has heard the situation was worst earlier.

But the students have the same complaints that they feel problems due to smog. "Though the level of smog has decreased a little we feel problems in our throat and often suffer from cough," said Sharmin Akhter Sumana, student of class V. Fatema Akhter of class IV supported her.

It was 12:30pm yesterday when this correspondent was talking to the students. Smog from Rani Steel Mill and Al Islam Steel and Re-rolling Mill was coming out as usual. But smog from Sun Re-rolling Mill was less this time.

The serious hazardous environment has led to a significant fall in the number of students at the school. A few years ago the school had around 1,600 students.

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