

■ OPINION ■

Jail cells can never be appropriate grounds to hold exams



PHOTOS: PALASH KHAN

AYAAN SHAMS SIDDIQUEE

On July 31, the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Jashore, released a public notice announcing that two detained HSC 2024 examinees would have to appear for their upcoming exams from Satkhira District Jail. The notice further urged relevant authorities to provide the necessary materials, such as question papers and answer sheets, to conduct the imprisoned test-taking.

It didn't take long for the notice to spark public outrage and make rounds on social media. The general populace lashed out with unrestrained criticism of the authorities, while other examinees joined together to drive the potential HSC boycott even further. Overall, the absurd nature of the entire predicament hasn't escaped anyone.

It's important to understand what's at stake here: the future of two bright, young students. An exam series that decides the trajectory of their higher education — and, to some degree, the rest of their lives — isn't to be taken lightly. This is a monumental event in their academic lives, the final board exam they'll sit for, and it should never be marred by imprisonment.

Keeping the legality of these imprisonments (or lack thereof) aside, the mental anguish each of these detainees must be facing must be considered. It would not take much time to learn that people not even on the frontlines have reported to be suffering from acute anxiety, restlessness, and an inability to sleep at night, solely because of what they're seeing on their screens and hearing around them. Things have gotten to the point where no one feels safe in their own homes any more.

That being said, one can only imagine the horror of being locked up behind bars for demonstrating



peaceful protests. Consider the fear, the desolation, the constant mental toll, and not to mention, the feeling of being isolated from friends and family indefinitely.

Even if we were to, for a second, consider a world where the remaining exams would take place normally with just a handful of students being sentenced to in-prison testing, how would you justify that? From being unable to sleep on their own beds the night before the exams to being deprived of a healthy environment to study in, all the odds would be stacked against the detained students.

Moreover, the idea of having a student to sit, perhaps

the most important board exams of their life, behind bars can pose serious questions to the credibility of the tests themselves. After all, one of the most crucial prerequisites of conducting exams in the first place is to provide equal opportunities to all candidates. That means all examinees are provided with carefully controlled and similar, if not identical, settings, which ensure their safety.

Hence, when someone is being forced to attend these exams from prison, it's unfair on them as they are not getting the exam-worthy conditions that others are getting, and calls to question the credibility of the entire premise of the exam.

Under such concerning and discriminatory circumstances, would it not be completely unrealistic and unjust to expect these students to perform at par with their peers? The likelihood of them achieving even a passing grade, let alone excelling, will be drastically reduced if things are allowed to progress like this. This is not merely a matter of academic performance — it is a grave injustice that could alter the course of their entire lives.

In these times, it is imperative that the student community does not condone the cruel punishment their fellow brothers are being subjected to. This is a situation that cannot be accepted or made light of in any way. Voices must be raised and justice has to be served.

Reference:

Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Jashore

Ayaan immerses himself in dinosaur comics and poorly-written manga. Recommend your least favourite reads at ayaan.shams@gmail.com

FCBATTOP1/24
To know more scan the QR code

**WITH BSRM FASTBUILD
YOUR HOME WILL BE BUILT ON TIME
WITH THE BEST QUALITY RODS**