

Colleagues unhappy with edn minister

Say he embarrassed the government

16 JULY 2026, 00:00 AM EDUCATION

SHARE 



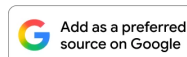
Sajjad Hossain



A section of BNP lawmakers and senior party leaders has expressed dissatisfaction with the way Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon handled the ongoing HSC exams fiasco, saying the ministry's decisions embarrassed the government.

They said the education ministry should not have proceeded with the exams in adverse weather and failed to effectively address students' grievances.

Tap Here to Add The Daily Star As A Trusted Source



According to at least 14 ruling party lawmakers and five BNP Standing Committee members, delayed decisions, poor coordination with local administrations and the minister's remarks deepened students' anger, triggering protests.

Four ministers and a state minister, all speaking separately on condition of anonymity, said this was the first major student protest faced by the government since it took office in February. They said the education ministry's mishandling of the issue triggered the protests, which escalated into confrontations with law enforcers and exposed weaknesses in the government's response to a sensitive public issue.

Students began protesting on Tuesday against the government's decision to proceed with the HSC examinations despite severe weather. The situation worsened after Milon was heard comparing examinees to "farm chickens" in a purportedly leaked phone conversation.

The minister later apologised and said authorities were considering whether three examinations held on Monday, despite heavy rain and waterlogging in Dhaka and other parts of the country, should be retaken.

"We discussed the issue informally outside parliament, with around 20 to 22 lawmakers taking part. All of them agreed that the minister had failed to handle the situation properly," a lawmaker from the Chattogram division told The Daily Star.

"He could have avoided much of the disruption through timely action and proper planning. The students would not have had to endure such hardship. In our view, the entire situation was mishandled," he said, requesting anonymity.

A minister, who is also a lawmaker from the Chattogram division, said there had been a clear lack of coordination between the education ministry and the field administration.

"I do not think ministry officials, including the education minister, paid enough attention to the situation or understood its seriousness," he said.

"If the local administration failed to act, the ministry should have intervened immediately. The minister should have ensured proper coordination before the situation worsened."

Another minister from the Dhaka division said the minister's speech in parliament neither addressed students' concerns nor calmed their anger.

"The education minister should have taken the students' concerns more seriously and spoken in parliament in a way that could reassure them," he said.

“His apology was neither clear nor adequate. He appeared overconfident in his ability to manage the situation, but his remarks failed to prevent the protests from escalating.”

A minister from the Rangpur division said the government should review the ministry’s response and identify where decision-making and communication broke down.

He said the issue had drawn considerable criticism on social media, but claimed that “a vested quarter” tried to exploit the protests and tarnish the government’s image.

Another lawmaker, also requesting anonymity, said no senior ministry official met the protesting students or assured them that their concerns would be addressed.

Senior BNP leaders also criticised the decision to continue the examinations despite the severe weather, despite Chhatra Dal’s call for postponement.

On Tuesday, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General and the prime minister’s political adviser Ruhul Kabir Rizvi backed students’ demand to postpone the HSC examinations, saying no examinee should risk travelling through floodwaters.

“The examinations can be held after the water recedes,” he said in Chattogram.



[For all latest news, follow The Daily Star's Google News channel.](#)

His call was echoed by Chhatra Dal’s general secretary, who urged the government to reconsider its decision in light of the flooding.

A BNP Standing Committee member, who is also a lawmaker, said the prime minister had previously asked cabinet members to avoid unnecessary remarks on sensitive issues.

“But the education minister’s comments did not help. I do not know how his private conversation reached social media. Such incidents create confusion and put the government in an uncomfortable position,” he said.

Three Chhatra Dal leaders told The Daily Star they had spoken to the education minister about concerns raised by examinees, including two disputed questions in the Physics First Paper examination.

“The minister said all students would receive full marks for those two questions. But some students realised during the examination that the questions were incorrect and did not attempt them,” one of the leaders said.

“They spent that time answering other questions but still could not answer all required questions. What will happen to those students? Will they be treated fairly?”

“The minister did not give us a clear answer,” he added.

Party insiders said the education minister, the state minister and the prime minister's adviser shared responsibility for the sector but failed to respond to the crisis in a timely manner.