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Flood-hit schools allowed to reopen a week later

JEDDAH: Some girls' schools in the flood-hit areas in Jeddah will be opened at least a week later than the scheduled reopening date of Saturday due to the need to repair some of the properties, a local education official said on Wednesday.

Students and staff at the affected schools will be placed temporarily in schools that weren't damaged when they open on Saturday for the new semester.

Meanwhile, Minister of Education Prince Faisal bin Abdullah ordered all school officials in the Kingdom to take required precautions to guarantee the safety of students and staff in any changing weather situation and act in line with the warnings of the Presidency of the Meteorology and Environment and the Civil Defense, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Thursday.

Emergency steps are being taken to repair all schools damaged in the recent floods, said Jeddah Education Director Abdullah Al-Thaqfi.

"In the meantime, students of the schools under repair will be sent to other schools nearest to their present places of stay. The relocated students will be taught in evening shifts in their new schools which would be reopened on Saturday after the Hajj vacation," Al-Thaqfi added.

Large numbers of students in flooded districts have gone with their families to temporary accommodations in various parts of Jeddah. Al-Thaqfi added that cleaning and repairing contractors were working hard to repair the schools so that the schools would be ready for normal work before the local residents return to their homes.

The department planned to identify schools in low-lying areas that could face flood threats in the future, he said.

The source said the repair contractors found it hard to reach the damaged schools because of the poor roads. At least five schools in Quw aizah, where more than 3,000 students studied, were seriously damaged and would require at least SR1 million for repairs, the source said.

The schools are Habib bin Zayd Primary, Abdul Rahman Al-Nasser Intermediate, Abu Al-Aswad Al-Duili Intermediate, Prince Majed bin Abdul Aziz Intermediate and Al-Hutaim Secondary.

"The ground floor of my school where 900 children study, is totally damaged. Five cars parked in the courtyard were washed away," said Ahmad Al-Asmari, principal of the Habib bin Zayd Primary School.

Participants in the meeting also recommended quick resumption of electricity to the schools, immediate cleaning of debris from inside the schools, quick completion of repair works and assessing the damages to furniture and teaching tools. The meeting also decided to send the students of the five

damaged schools in the Suleimania district to join evening shifts.

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