

# English Medium Schools Under Regulation

Govt to oversee curriculum, O & A level examinations

TAWFIQUE ALI

For the first time in country's history, the government proposes to institute a comprehensive mechanism to regulate activities of English medium schools.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia formed a national committee comprising representatives from leading English medium schools and officials of education ministry, headed by the PM's principal secretary Dr. Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, sources said.

The committee has been working for the last 11 months, aiming to regulate setting-up, registration, curriculum, examination and management of English medium schools.

Three sub-committees under the national committee have been working on framing regulations on curriculum and teacher training and remuneration.

The sub-committee on framing a regulatory body submitted its recommendation for an education board to streamline those schools around a month ago to the education ministry.

The two other sub-committees extended their deadline twice. Representatives of English medium schools have shown strong reservation to the government proposal for a unified curriculum, and teacher training, recruitment and salary policy.

All three reports will go to the national committee and seek PM's final approval.

There has been remarkable progress in instituting a mechanism for streamlining English medium schools in keeping with country's law, culture, tradition and values, said a committee member.

"We have sent a proposed framework for a separate education board to regulate English medium schools," he said.

The proposed regulatory board will be based in the capital and will oversee curriculum and examinations.

Dr Gazi Md Ahsanul Kabir, chairman, National Curriculum

and Textbook Board and convenor of the three-member sub-committee on framing the regulatory body said: "We are working on streamlining English medium schools and comprehensive work has been done so far in this regard."

Most government officials concerned with the matter have been tight-lipped on the committee's work apprehending pressure from certain quarters against such a move, sources said.

"We are aware from past experiences that influential quarters behind these enterprises will leave no stone unturned to resist any such move by the government," said a member of a sub-committee.

Education Secretary Montajul Islam said: "A high level committee is working rigorously on how to bring the English medium schools under government control. The committee is likely to come up soon with the recommendations."

"None can catch them unless a clearly laid down legal framework is in place," said Education Minister, Dr Osman Farruk. "We have asked all English medium schools for texts and curriculum to examine what they teach."

"Exploitation, capitalising on foreign education is unprecedented anywhere in the world other than in Bangladesh," said a member of a sub-committee.

The existing East Pakistan Intermediate and Secondary Ordinance of 1961 (amended in 1962) hardly provides any legal means to regulate activities of these schools effectively.

The primary education directorate has a scant oversight on Kindergarten schools, secondary education directorate on those offering tuition up to class eight and the education board on those conducting tuition up to class 12.

But none of the authorities can take legal action against any aberrant school in absence of a governing law.

There is no effective and

coordinated overview on how these schools actually deliver their business, said sources of the secondary and higher secondary education board.

The board has so far identified a total of 110 English medium schools in the capital.

These establishments are not treated as schools because they began as tutorial centres but later the entrepreneurs claimed them as schools with physical expansion of size and scope, said board sources.

Presently, Bangladeshi students appear for 'O' and 'A' (Ordinary and Advanced) level examinations held by Edexcel (Education Excellence) in the United Kingdom, said the country manager of Edexcel Saidur Rahman.

Edexcel has been operating in Bangladesh since 1973, and was affiliated with the University of London examinations board till 1996.

But it has been one of the three full-fledged and independent education boards in the United Kingdom since 1996, that has obtained approval of its curriculum from the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) of the UK.

The British Council locally facilitates academic and examination matters of Edexcel under an agreement. Edexcel itself offers courses, sets questions, holds examination and confer O and A Level qualifications.

Students also take up 'O' and 'A' level courses offered by Cambridge University under its Cambridge International Examination (CIE). Some students who take up an American high school diploma under General Education Development (GED) are left with a gross break-up in their studies, said sources.

# DCC implements master plan to keep city clean

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has started implementing a master plan for conservancy management to keep the city clean and improve services to the dwellers.

Although the Tk 900 crore project is scheduled to complete in 2015, DCC officials said the city dwellers will start enjoying better services from December this year.

DCC is implementing the "Clean Dhaka Master Plan" in phases in cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Officials said they have prioritised four components of the plan -- regulation of community based waste management, establishment of a sanitary landfill site, strengthening of vehicles and institutional capacity and financial strengthening in the corporation's conservancy department.

Although the community based waste management system has been introduced under private initiative, DCC will join hands with the social organisations and other local service providers to make it a coordinated system.

"The community based conservancy service in the city has gained popularity but these activities are going on in a scattered way. We will bring them under a regulation and DCC will jointly work with these service providers to ensure better service," said Dr Tariq Bin Yousuf, executive engineer, Waste Management Division of DCC.

DCC has started working with the service providers in ward 6 and 65 on pilot basis. The DCC officials said they are going to bring five more wards soon under this project.

The work on establishing a sanitary landfill site at Matuail where DCC is presently dumping waste has started. The project of sanitary landfill will cost Tk 46 crore and funded by Jica. Facilities for recycling the waste will also be there.

"The by-products of waste are mainly toxic liquids, gas and other components which harm the environment and groundwater. We will collect the



from the city properly. Against a total generation of 3,100 tonnes of waste in the city DCC could collect only 1,500 tonnes a day.

"The master plan includes procurement of new vehicles for the department. These vehicles will be specially designed to collect more waste," said Dr Yousuf. The routes of the vehicles will be rearranged to ensure optimum use of the capacity.

"We will bring the activities of the drivers and cleaners under a computerised logging observation and planning to offer an incentive for the workers who will collect more waste than their target," said Yousuf.

The fourth part of the master plan is institutional and financial strengthening of the Conservancy Department. Under this project, DCC will arrange training and motivation programme for its employees to ensure efficient service from them.

"With the implementation of the master plan the waste management will be more scientific and the city will be clean and pollution-free," said Sohel Faruque, chief conservancy officer, DCC.

toxic liquids in a pond before they mix with the groundwater," said Dr Yousuf.

The officials of DCC said they will collect the gas produced from the waste for further use and the waste collected from the city

households and streets will be covered after dumping so that these could not harm the environment.

DCC also has a plan to establish a waste recycling plant at the dumping ground.

The master plan also includes strengthening of vehicles capacity of the DCC for better conservancy management.

Due to shortage of vehicles in the conservancy department, DCC cannot collect the waste

## Charukala

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Rafiqun Nabi of Painting Department said: "There is a crisis of classrooms at the moment contributing to persisting session jam. To address this problem, we are trying to take the examinations on time and publish the results as soon as possible."

"A new building for the administrative section is under construction. If it moves there then the vacant rooms can be used as classrooms", he added.

But no one from the institute could tell when construction will be finished.

When contacted the institute director, Farida Zaman admitted the scarcity of classrooms, but did not want to make any further comment on the allegations by the students.

Meanwhile other teachers said that students are instructed to start the next year's class right after finishing the current year's final exam, but students do not agree to this.

"If they do not start classes right away and ask for a break, the session jam will never end," said one teacher.

"The main reason for this session jam was created with the old system running parallel to the new one. It is not easy to run both courses side by side with such limited resources," said another teacher.

Students said that the art materials are very expensive. In the Department of Painting, a student at least needs five canvases of good quality which are around Tk 5,000 each and other utensils like colours which total to an amount of Tk 7,000 just to appear in one exam.

The university does not provide any subsidised items, but students of physics of the Dhaka University (DU) get graph paper free of cost during exams and for other assignments.

"All obstacles added, it takes a student eight years instead of four years to complete the course," another student said.

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