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President flays political parties for campus terrorism

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed on Saturday blamed the political parties for shying away from supporting the decision of raising tuition fees for the university students for fear of losing their campus guards, reports UNB.

"The political parties kept mum rather than support it lest their politics goes bust for lack of leverage from the students," the President said out of concern for the degrading standards of education.

He pinpointed six main problems contributing to the existing critical situation from primary to higher levels of education.

These are poor education administration and management, improper education system and syllabus, want of qualified, trained and experienced teachers, defective examination system, lack of accountability in all spheres of education, and campus terrorism.

The President made the observations speaking at a function

organised by the Foundation for Research on Educational Planning and Development (FREPD) on its Silver Jubilee and general meeting at BISS auditorium.

He said the universities are not only a place for higher education, it also is a seat of flourishing - free and independent thoughts for which universities are being considered autonomous worldwide.

"But the universities of our country are dependent on the government", he said citing Dhaka University where 93 per cent of the total budget is funded by government grants.

The President said university authorities opposed whenever the topic of raising the student fees arose in the past on the excuse of "educational contraction".

He said the per-month food charge of the dormitories rose to Tk 800 from 30 over 50 years. And if the students can pay Tk

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President flays

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800 as food bills, then why not Tk 25 instead of 10 as fees, he questioned.

"But I did not get any logical answer," he lamented from his experience as the National Pay Commission Chairman in 1985.

Underlining the importance of education as key to development, President Shahabuddin said it is the main tool for development of human resources to attain socio-economic progress.

For that reason, he said, all countries lay importance on education, particularly learning of science and technology.

The more a country is successful in it, the more social and

economic progress of it will be," the President told the function.

Citing the examples of some East and Southeastern countries, like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines, he said Bangladesh was lagging behind them because of backward education.

Lauding the role of FREPD over last 25 years as a non-profitable, voluntary, non-government organisation in conducting 50 researches, he said the objective research activities made important contributions for the development of education.

He said the objective research works of FREPD are playing vital role in improving educational standard, quantitative expansion, identifying adverse problems in proper planning of renovation and development, analysing and solving the problems.

The President hoped that the recommendations prepared based on facts and findings in the research conducted by FREPD would help in policymaking and implementation.

"National Education Commission was formed on July 26, 1972 with a view to overhauling country's education system maintaining consistency with its heritage, values and ideals which placed its report in 1974", but the recommendations were neither evaluated nor implemented during 24 years, he resented.

The President mentioned some steps taken by the present government to formulate education policy. A 54-member committee, headed by Education Adviser Prof. Shamsul Huq, has already submitted report formulating education policy which is under consideration of the government.

Referring to the highest budget allocations in education sector, the President said stipend for girl students from primary level to class ten has been introduced to encourage women education.

The government has also planned free education for the girl students in twelfth class.

Necessary steps have already been taken for eradicating illiteracy in next 10 years, President Shahabuddin pointed out.