

Move underway to reduce SSC, HSC subjects and exam days

NCTB prepares concept paper proposing rationalisation of subjects and reduction in exam schedules

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Authorities concerned are considering reforms to the public examination system by reducing the number of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) subjects and shortening examination schedules to ease stress of students and minimise disruption to regular academic activities.

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has prepared a concept paper and action plan proposing a rationalisation of examination subjects and a significant reduction in the number of working days required for SSC and HSC exams. The proposal has been submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval.



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NCTB Chairman Md Mahbulul Haque Patwary said a workshop involving educationists, experts, parents, students, education board representatives and other stakeholders will be organised following the ministry's directives. Recommendations from the workshop will help shape final decisions, he added.

According to the concept paper, SSC examinations currently require about 25-30 working days, while HSC examinations take 30-35 days or longer. Since educational institutions are used as examination centres, regular classes remain suspended in thousands of schools during this period.

The NCTB also noted that lengthy examinations increase mental stress for students, keep many teachers occupied with examination duties, and delay result publication and admission processes.

A two-day stakeholder workshop is planned to review the current subject structures, explore ways to reduce examination time, assess the feasibility of holding SSC examinations by December, determine the balance between continuous and summative assessments, and develop implementation and risk-mitigation strategies.

The NCTB will also study the existing practices in countries, including India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore, to determine a reasonable minimum number of examination subjects.

Discussions will focus on possible subject integration, restructuring compulsory and optional subjects, revising question formats, modernising practical assessments and strengthening school-based evaluation. A final framework will be prepared based on stakeholder feedback.

Participants will include officials from the Ministry of Education, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), the Directorate of Madrasa and Technical Education, education boards, researchers, teachers, parents and students. Around 90 stakeholders are expected to contribute to the recommendations.

The expert panel includes Emeritus Professor Manzoor Ahmed of Brac University and Professor Hosne Ara Begum, director of the Institute of Education and Research (IER) at Dhaka University.

NCTB Member (Curriculum) Professor AKM Masudul Haque said the process is being carried forward through coordination among the NCTB, the Dhaka Education Board and other relevant stakeholders following the ministry's directives.

"Key examination-related issues will be determined in coordination with the Inter-Education Board Examination Management Committee," he said.