



## New incentive to 'food-for-education' from next fiscal: Saifur

A new incentive package alternative to the 'food-for-education' for rural primary school children will begin in full swing all over the country from the next fiscal year, reports UNB.

Ground works, including collection of preliminary data of students, their family income positions and assessment of the money involvement, are going on to re-start the programme from July this year.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman said this at a national seminar on 'Education for All Week-2002', organised by Primary and Mass Education Division at BIAM auditorium.

Under this new programme, each poor student will get Tk 100 per month and Tk 125 for more than one in a family, in addition to primary education free of cost.

Saifur regretted that the previous government had shelved the government-sponsored 'food-for-education' programme on the plea of fund shortage and terming it as a wasteful exercise.

Since the present government gives topmost priority to the improvement of quality of primary education, the Prime Minister nodded to the programme at the very first meeting of ECNEC to ensure school enrollment of all rural children, he said.

School enrollment had increased significantly and dropout rate dropped drastically in 1995 as the then government introduced 20 kgs of wheat for every poor student per month that cost the government roughly Tk 300 crore a year.

Multilateral agencies, including World Bank and many other donor communities, had opposed the idea but the government went ahead with the programme to serve a twin-goal of education expansion as well as poverty reduction as poor rural parents often prefer sending their children to work rather than schools.

Primary and Mass Education Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister Prof Jahanara Begum also deplored the insignificant salary of non-government primary teachers. "How can a teacher run his family by Tk 500 a month when a housemaid demands more than that?" she questioned.

If the status of those who impart teaching is not taken care of, the overall quality and development of education will remain a far cry, Prof Jahanara said.

She also pointed to the reluctance of supervisory authorities of

the school education, saying that if they had been active enough, the quality of education would not have deteriorated.

Keynote speaker Dr Anwarul Haq, former director general of National Academy of Education Management (NAEM), said much have been spent for the improvement of primary education in the last 20 years, but the quality has not improved because educational structures are faulty and approaches so far made are not correlated.

### 20 shops

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extortion from them and attacked the market following the refusal to pay money.

A Vice President of the suspended central committee of JCD termed the incident a result of previous factional enmity between Laltu and Pintu factions.

The former JCD President and lawmaker from Dhaka-8 constituency - Lalbagh, dominates the Palassy area and the Laltu faction controls the Sergeant Zahurul Haq Hall.

In another incident agitated students set an auto-rickshaw on fire after an abortive snatching attempt in front of the VC House on the campus.

The mob caught three snatchers red-handed and handed them over to the police after a good beating. Police took all three wounded snatchers to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for first aid. A case was also filed with Ramna police station in this regard.