

Education on top of all

Allocation increased by 13pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has proposed raising allocation in the education sector by 13.5 percent in the budget for the next fiscal year.

A proposal has been made for allocating Tk 17,959 crore in the revenue and development budget for the sector against the existing allocation of over Tk 14,006 crore.

The government gave top priority to the sector considering education as one of the core strategies to alleviate poverty and facilitate development.

The finance minister said the proposed allocation in the education sector is the highest in the country's history and almost double that of any other sector.

An allocation of Tk 8,062 crore has been set for the primary and mass education ministry and another Tk 9,865 crore for education ministry.

The minister said many of last year's plans had

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

Education

FROM PAGE 1
already been implemented.

He said the government took projects such as school feeding programme, giving stipends at primary level and installation of teaching centres at char, haor, and remote areas to achieve the target of 100 percent enrolment at primary level by 2010.

Construction of 40,000 more classrooms and introduction of pre-primary education in government schools are also measures to meet the target.

The government will continue giving stipends involving Tk 4,035 crore at primary school level from its own resources until 2013.

The coverage of stipend has recently been widened to 78.17 lakh students, he said.

The government also proposed setting up 1,500 primary schools.

The minister did not mention any allocation for implementing the National Education Policy 2010, which was initiated to introduce a modern and job-oriented education system.

On the monthly payment order (MPO) scheme, he said the government could not bring as many non-governmental institutions under MPO facilities as it had desired.

The finance minister focused on female education, saying arrangements have been made to give stipends to female students at secondary and higher secondary levels and also financial assistance for purchasing books and paying fees for public examinations.

He talked about the government's commitments including formulation of Private University Act, reducing the teacher-student ratio, free distribution of textbooks and providing 100 percent basic salary to the teachers of registered non-government and community primary schools.

In an instant reaction to the huge allocation in the education sector, Hossain Zillur Rahman, education adviser to the last caretaker government, said it is more important to ensure quality education than to increase allocations in the sector.

Any initiative to improve the quality of education remains absent. No step to that end had been witnessed either in the previous budgets, he said.

"It is important to ensure everyone's access to education, but we also need a separate plan to improve the quality of education. At the same time, we need a system to check whether the mechanism is working properly."