

EXTRA ADMISSION FEES

City schools deaf to govt directives

WASIM BIN HABIB

The capital's non-government schools, which have charged high admission fees violating rules, are paying no heed to the government's directives to return the extra money or adjust it with students' monthly fees.

Five months on since the government's directives, which were issued following public outcry, no schools have complied with them yet, guardians alleged.

For the non-compliance, they blamed the education ministry's lax in taking effective steps. The directives apart, the ministry had not taken any visible step to this end, they said.

According to the January 30 directives, the schools where a section of their teachers enjoy monthly pay order (MPO) facilities, can charge no higher than Tk 8,000 in admission, session, and other fees for Bangla version and Tk 10,000 for English version. The schools where all teachers get MPO facilities must not charge more than Tk 5,000.

"If any school realised higher admission fees, it will have to return the extra money or adjust it with the monthly fees," the directives state.

The directives came following media reports that most of the renowned schools in Dhaka have charged extra money violating the admission policy for the non-government schools.

The admission charges ranged between Tk 8,000 and Tk 32,000 for class-I, while the policy sets the limit at no more than Tk 5,000 for admission to schools in Dhaka city.

A government enquiry committee also found that the capital's 24 out of 32 reputed non-government schools charged much higher fees.

Monipur High School and College; Viqarunnisa Noon School and College; Ideal School and College, Motijheel; Mohammadpur Preparatory School and College; Biam Model School and College; and Motijheel Model School are among these schools.

"We were hopeful after government's firm stand about the refund or at least adjustment

of the extra charge with the monthly fees, but nothing happened," a guardian whose daughter is a student at Motijheel Ideal School said, wishing anonymity.

Another guardian whose son studies at Monipur High School said, "We cannot put pressure on the school authorities or lodge any complaint with the ministry fearing troubles of our children."

Ziaul Kabir Dulu, president of Obhibhabok Oikya Forum, a platform of guardians, said, "It seemed that the government's duty ends with issuing of the directives, and nothing else. No monitoring whatsoever."

Even the ministry appears to have a lack of seriousness to punish the violators, he added.

Contacted, Farhad Hossain, principal of Monipur High School, said his school had not taken any formal decision about refunding or adjusting the money.

"As the head of the institution, I have not received any letter in this regard. The decision would come from managing committee, as the letter has been sent to it," he said.

Manju Ara Begum, principal of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, said the authorities had not adjusted the extra money, as they were yet to get the governing body's decision.

"We have placed it at the governing body's meeting but it hasn't given any decision. Whatever decision it gives, we'll comply with that," she said.

Similar response came from Shahan Ara, principal of Ideal School and College, Motijheel. "I have placed the matter in two meetings of the governing body. The chairman of the governing body said that he has sent a letter to the prime minister about the issue," she said.

"I will place it in the next meeting again."

Education Secretary Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury said the ministry had sent letters to the schools, which took extra charges, asking them to inform the ministry of their progress on the directives.

"We have also asked the directorate of secondary and higher education about what steps it has taken in this regard," he told The Daily Star.