

## Secondary education project surpasses targets: WB

Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha - Dhaka

A GOVERNMENT project has significantly increased number of students and enhanced quality of education at secondary level beyond its target, the World Bank said in a statement Tuesday. The project titled the Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project surpassed the initial targets for students appearing at the Secondary School Certificate exams and the secondary school completion rates with around 210,000 poor students appearing at the SSC exams in 125 upazilas.

SSC pass rate, gender parity and the share of poor in secondary enrollment have improved considerably, the Bank said.

It observed that the project provides incentive awards to students, teachers and schools and extends support to students in English and Mathematics in order to improve academic performance.

Nearly one million poor girls and boys now receive stipend to continue their secondary education. So far, 146 thousand poor students have received SSC pass awards, way above the target of 84 thousand for the first four years of the project.

During this period, nearly five thousand institutions received SSC institutional awards against the target of 3,566 institutions, the WB said.

According to the WB, the project emphasises improvement of secondary education quality through a series of academic support interventions and incentive schemes. The project systematically measures the quality of learning and academic competencies of students. One set of assessments on English, Maths and Bangla for Grade 8 students has already been completed.

The results of these in-

dependent assessments will inform the policymakers and the stakeholders and help them adjust quality-related policies and interventions accordingly. The project helps build appropriate capacity to mainstream the assessment system.

About 5,62,000 students have now been brought under a 'developing reading habit programme' with support from Bishwa Sahitya Kendra when 109,000 additional classes on English and Mathematics were offered last year to the students in the rural institutions where performance in these subjects was particularly weak in the past.