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## Govt pry schools also charging admission fees

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MOST of the government primary schools across the country have allegedly been charging admission fees clearly violating the Education Policy 2010, according to guardians and teachers.

The Education Policy 2010, approved by the Jatiya Sangsad, reads: 'Primary education is universal and free. Providing education of the same quality to all students is a duty of the government.'

In most cases, guardians from lower income groups chose to admit their kids in the government primary

schools and charging admission fees simply put a burden on them.

However, the teachers claim that 'insufficient contingency fees' provided by the government forced them to charge some fees from the guardians of admission-seekers to meet the regular expenditure including salary of a private supporting staff for the school.

Sobdar Howlader, father of a pre-primary student of the Rotary Government Primary School at Rajabazar in Dhaka, told New Age on Tuesday that he needed to pay Tk 250 as admission

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fees and for the admission form.

Day-labourer Sekandar Ali, father of Imran, a class III admission-seeker in the same school, told New Age that he needed to buy an admission form with Tk 50 on Wednesday. He said, no money receipt was provided from the school and admission will take place on January 8.

Hosney Ara Bhuiyan, head teacher of the School said government pays only TK 8,400 yearly as contingency fee which was insufficient.

'We need to pay a maid-servant Tk. 2,000 monthly. As per the government rules government primary schools have no supporting staffs, so

we need to hire a private one and pay her,' she defended.

Rina Saha, head teacher of Islamia Samity Government Primary School at Tejjason, said, 'It is not possible for a teacher or student to clean the school premises so we need a private staff. We have been charging a little fee to pay monthly salary of the private maid-servant for the last few years with the permission from school management committee.'

'If the government recruits supporting staff for every school or increase the yearly contingency fees we must stop charging fees,' she said.

Shymal Kanti Ghosh, director general (DG) of the Directorate of Primary Education, said: 'Any type of fees

is prohibited in government and registered non-government primary schools. We must take action against the headmasters and also the SMC members for charging any fees.'

He said all the 20 teachers of Nabaganj Government Primary School under Lalbagh thana in Dhaka have been transferred to remote rural areas as a punishment for charging fees on Monday.

The head teacher of the school Noore Alam Siddique has been suspended and thana primary education officer has been transferred to Jokiganj in Sylhet.

Shymal Kanti said that the government has decided to recruit a total of 37,672 supporting staff for all the government primary

schools across the country very soon. He, however, said nothing about increasing the contingency fees.

There are 37,672 government primary schools offering education up to Class V.

M Abdul Awal Talukder, president of Bangladesh Government Primary School Teachers Association said, 'We would hold a meeting with the DG soon to review the decision to transfer and suspend of our colleagues for charging fees.'

'If found there is no redress, we would stop admission process in the Dhaka Schools. Several times we met government high-ups including ministers but found no results to recruit supporting staff,' he added.