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EXTRA ADMISSION FEES

HC wants reports on action by July 16

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THE High Court on Sunday asked the government to report on July 16 the action the government has taken against 46 private schools and colleges which have yet to return or adjust the additional amount of money they charged from students during admission in the 2011–2012 academic session.

A bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Zafar Ahmed passed the order with a modification of its earlier order asking the education ministry and the secondary and higher education directorate to submit the report by July 23.

Deputy attorney general Mokleshur Rahman told New Age that he had already conveyed the court's order to secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury and DSHE director general Fahima Khatun.

The court gave the order as Sara Hossain, counsel lawyer for the petitioners, had sought the rescheduling of the hearing saying that she would not be in town on July 23.

The Campaign for Popular Education executive director, Rasheda K Chowdhury, and the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust deputy director, Farida Yasmin, filed the writ petition challenging the legality of extra amount in the Tk 8,000–Tk 25,000 being charged from students by the institutions flouting government guidelines.

The extra amount was being charged in the name of donation to the fund set up for different purposes.

The education ministry in a circular on December 14, 2011 set out a guideline that admission fee, including session fee and others, for a student in the city would not exceed Tk 5,000.

The admission fees for a student in schools of other metropolitan areas were set at Tk 3,000, of district headquarters Tk 2,000, of upazila headquarters Tk 1,000 and of rural areas Tk 500.

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Following the writ petition, the High Court on January 9, 2012 directed the authorities to submit a report to it in three months on the action they had so far taken against the schools and colleges that were charging additional admission fees.

In keeping with the HC order, an inspection report of the education ministry was submitted to the High Court bench in December 2012 which said that 24 schools and colleges in Dhaka had charged additional fees flouting 2011 admission guidelines.

The directorate of secondary and higher education inspected 32 institutions, the ministry said. Eight of them charged fees less than Tk 5,000, 10 charged between Tk 5,000 to Tk 10,000, and 14 charged more than Tk 10,000, according to the inspection report prepared in January 2012.

The ministry's report also annexed the report that the National Security Intelligence had submitted to the education secretary stating that 46 schools and colleges across the country were charging additional fees flouting the guidelines the ministry set on December 14, 2011.

Of the institutions, 16 are in Dhaka, 10 in Chittagong, 12 in Feni, 4 in Kushtia and 1 each in Rajshahi, Jessore and Lalmonirhat, the NSI report said.

According to the both reports, most of the renowned schools and colleges were among the list of 24 institutions that were charging additional fees.

The ministry in December 2012 suspended the monthly pay order of the principal of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, Manju Ara Begum, from November 2012 and asked her to explain in seven days why her MPO benefits would not be cancelled, the ministry's report said.

It also directed the authorities of the directorate of secondary and higher education to take action against Motijheel Ideal School and College. But the action was reported in the report of the ministry.

The ministry, however, did not report to the court the action taken against other schools and colleges.