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# Schools closed for minister's reception

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Primary school teachers of Ishwardi closed all primary schools in the upazila to host a reception for Land Minister Shamsur Rahman Sharif yesterday, just three days ahead of the first terminal exams.

The upazila unit of Bangladesh Primary Teachers' Association organised a meeting on upgrading the quality of education, but the programme was meant for hosting a reception for the land minister.

A total of 627 teachers of 96 government primary schools joined the

programme at the Ishwardi upazila parishad auditorium around noon, according to the association.

"Being government employees, we can't accord reception to political leaders. Our lawmaker Shamsur Rahman Sharif has been appointed as a cabinet minister. To host a reception for him, we have organised the view-exchange meeting," said Md Wahidur Rahman, secretary of association's Ishwardi upazila unit.

"We gave the minister a gold lapel pin as a token of love for him," added Wahidur, also

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the organising secretary of the platform's central unit.

On closing all primary schools in the upazila, he said every primary school can announce casual leave for three days in a year. Primary schools in Ishwardi declared a casual leave for Saturday with permission from the primary education department for organising the event, he mentioned.

Each teacher paid Tk 50 for arranging the programme and purchasing the lapel pin, said primary teacher Amirul Islam.

Though the theme of the meeting was upgrading the quality of education, the event turned into a political programme with local political leaders speaking at the meeting.

"Although we organised a view-exchange meeting, it was in fact a reception programme. The newly appointed minister along with the recently elected upazila chairman and vice-chairmen were accorded reception through the programme," said a primary school teacher on condition of anonymity.

Students and guardians were critical of sudden closing of schools just ahead of the exams.

"The first terminal exams in primary schools will begin on Wednesday. With Saturday declared as a holiday, the schools will remain closed for three consecutive days ahead of the exams, which would make the students suffer," said Sekendar Ali of Baghoil village.