

International Literacy Day today

Ministers provide contradictory statistics on literacy

Staff Correspondent

BANGLADESH celebrates International Literacy Day today amid confusion over the number of literates in the country.

The confusion has been created by the Awami League-led government's immediate past and the incumbent minister of primary and mass education as well as the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Speaking at a news conference at his office on Sunday, primary and mass education minister Mostafizur Rahman said 61 per cent people in the country were literate now.

Last year, he said 65 per cent of the people of Bangladesh were literate.

Immediate past primary and mass education minister Afsarul Amin said that 71 per cent people of the country were literate in 2013.

The confusion was compounded by education minister Nurul Islam Nahid after he told Parliament on June 16 that 70 per cent people of the country were literate. Nahid quoted BBS statistics while replying to a written question from a ruling AL MP.

Primary and mass education ministry officials said that the rate of literacy among people aged 15 and above is counted.

Quoting BBS statistics

based on Sample Vital Registration System 2013 released in June, the mass education minister said on the eve of the International Literacy Day that 61 per cent of people aged 15 and up were now literate and the rate was 57.2 per cent for people aged 7 and up.

According to BBS, literacy among people aged 15 and up increased to 61 per cent in 2013, from 58.4 per cent in 2009.

The minister of primary and mass education avoided answering a question on the confusion created by dish-ing out contradictory statistics relating to the country's literacy rate.

This year, the UN designated 'Literacy and Sustainable Societies' for the celebration of the International Literacy Day by the member nations.

The primary and mass education ministry will celebrate the day through a special programme at Osmani Memorial Hall to be attended by prime minister Sheikh Hasina as the chief guest. Celebrators, carrying placards and festoons, would in a procession march to Osmani Memorial Hall from the Central Shahid Minar.

The Campaign for Popular Education and teachers' associations will hold rallies and seminars to mark the day.