

Aberrant teachers in Dhaka must be held to account

IT IS unacceptable that 522 government school teachers in the capital have been working at their respective institutions for 10 to 33 years although they are not allowed to work at the same station for more than three years. According to the Anti-Corruption Commission's investigation, as New Age reported on Thursday, they managed to overstay at the capital's schools by 'lobbying' the authorities to be able to continue with their coaching business. The commission, rightly, recommended transferring any teacher serving in the same school for more than five years to schools outside the capital and anyone serving in the same school for more than three years to another school in the capital. Another disquieting fact is that seven district education officers have been posted as headmasters to seven schools in gross violation of rules. The commission began the investigation on complaints that some teachers overstayed in schools for too long by greasing the authorities.

All such corrupt and unethical practices constitute some of the insuperable challenges to good governance in the education sector. Most of the schools in the capital now function like business houses rather than academic institutions, with a section of teachers often found negligent in their classes and duties. It has transpired that students are compelled to attend coaching classes as these teachers often say that they would not shoulder any responsibility if any student fails in examinations for not attending coaching classes. It is also true that because of rampant commercialisation of education pursued by successive governments, it has become a costly commodity with ample opportunities for a section of teachers in the capital to engage in private coaching. Moreover, as many teachers are posted to schools without adhering to certain rules for attaching equal importance to all areas of the country, most schools in the districts lag behind their counterparts in the capital in terms of performance in the Secondary School Certificate, Primary Education Completion and Junior School Certificate examinations. In fact, one cannot isolate the situation in question from the unabated bias of the incumbents against areas in other districts when it comes to development, social and economic in particular.

The government needs to realise that it is there to ensure uniform education for all citizens, as stipulated in the constitution, regardless of their class and birth place. Leaving a huge number of people devoid of proper education, the nation cannot think of making any progress, social, economic and otherwise. To ensure uniform education for all, the government's first step would be to act in accordance with the commission's recommendations as laid out in its investigation report. It also needs to put in place a system of intense monitoring and prosecute those who are involved in immoral activities and punish them exemplarily. Or else, the situation may end up leaving adverse impact on social stability.