'Missing classes don't mean becoming militant

Says Nahid but asks teachers to keep watch on absentees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urging all to not raise allegations against students over confusions, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday clarified that the ministry had in no way meant to say that students absent for 10 consecutive days were involved in militancy when it asked teachers to check up on such absentees.

"...the teachers will contact the guardian. If the guardians show a reason of sickness or say their children are helping them in the field, things will be finished here," he told an award giving ceremony in the capital's Bishwo Sahitto Kendro (BSK).

If the guardians express concerns, the teacher will inform the upazila education officer, who will pass it on to deputy commissioners. "The DCs will take steps through police and inform us," he said.

The programme, organised under the ministry's Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project (SEQAEP), saw 153 librarians selected from 40 Dhaka Division upazilas in 2015 being presented "Best Organisers Honorary Award", a cheque worth Tk 4,000, a book and a certificate each.

Nahid viewed book reading programmes as one of the effective ways to resist militancy. "The students should be brought up as a good human being first. For that to happen, they will have to be provided with good books," he said.

He admitted that the creative question method introduced at secondary level six years ago was yet to bear fruit.

The problem lies in teachers accustomed to the old fashioned education system lacking the eagerness to work on it despite being provided training, he said.

BSK President Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed said reading books regularly would change students' attitudes, enabling them to love themselves and their country.

With the help of BSK, SEQAEP is implementing a "developing reading habit programme" in 250 upazilas where teachers and librarians are organising and encouraging youths to read books at educational institutions.