

budget

Stipends proposed for male students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam yesterday proposed a new stipend programme for poor male students that will be introduced in 121 upazilas in the fiscal year 2008-09.

This programme is aimed at increasing the rate of enrolment of male students at secondary level.

"Along with ongoing female stipend across the country, a stipend programme for the poor male students will also be introduced in next fiscal year in 121 Upazilas to increase the rate of male enrolment," the finance adviser said in his budget speech yesterday.

He said significant progress has been made in female education, following the increase in enrolment of female students at secondary and higher secondary level by 52 per cent.

Mirza Aziz added that guidelines for the female stipend programme would also be revised to lay greater emphasis on the quality of education imparted.

The finance adviser also proposed establishment of 63 model high schools in the country in order to reduce the gap between the standard of urban and rural education.

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"The disparity that exists in the quality of education between the urban and rural areas is widening. In order to reduce this gap, steps have been taken to establish model high schools in those upazilas where there are no government schools. A selection process is underway to select 63 schools to convert them into model high schools," Mirza Aziz mentioned.

The caretaker government yesterday proposed Tk 5700 cr for primary and mass education and Tk 6296 cr for secondary and higher education for the fiscal year 2008-09.

The finance adviser said the six-year Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-II) with an outlay of Tk 1,800 crore is being implemented to widen primary education and to enhance its quality.

"Around 55 lakh students are receiving stipends annually. All these steps have helped to achieve a 50:50 ratio of male and female students at government primary schools," the adviser pointed out.

"In FY 2008-09, as many as 33 lakh newly literate persons will be imparted job-oriented training to help retain their level of literacy and to raise their living standards,"

he said adding that the ongoing programme will continue to bring down the current student-teacher ratio of 55:1 to 46:1 and increase the rate of enrolment to 90 per cent by 2009.

The finance adviser also said only around 2-3 per cent of total students at secondary and higher secondary levels receive technical and vocational education.

"In line with national goals, vocational education at various levels is being introduced to equip our youth force with technical and vocational skills," he said.

The adviser said that the government has recently approved the Private Universities Ordinance, 2008 to uphold the quality of education in public and private universities.

"Under this Ordinance, an Accreditation Council will also be formed to compare our higher education system with international standards to determine the standing of our public and private universities," he said.

"In the current fiscal year, we have allocated Tk 10 cr to carry out research in areas of physical, mathematical and biological sciences. In the next fiscal year, I propose to allocate Tk 15 cr to this end," Mirza Aziz pointed out.