

PM too finds MPO fakes

*Asks edn minister to
check adviser's list*

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Controversy over the revised MPO list took a new turn as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself yesterday detected 'fake' educational institutions on the list prepared by her education adviser Alauddin Ahmed.

At the weekly cabinet meeting, she found that at least seven institutions got listed for the monthly payment order (MPO) facilities by submitting demand orders (DOs) using forged signatures of one or two ministers and some lawmakers, highly placed sources told The Daily Star.

Even two or three institutions which have no existence are also on the revised MPO list, the premier chairing the meeting held at the Secretariat told her cabinet colleagues.

She directed the education minister to immediately remove

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from the MPO list those institutions which used forged signatures of ministers and lawmakers, and finalise the list after scrutinising thoroughly if there are more such institutions.

The premier also directed the minister to increase the number of institutions on the MPO list in the next fiscal year.

Asked about this, one minister said some 200-300 more institutions might be listed.

Earlier, the parliamentary standing committee on education ministry after a probe revealed that the MPO list for non-government secondary and higher secondary educational institutions has been marred by irregularities.

Controversy over the list arose immediately after the education ministry announced it on May 6. Many of the ministers and lawmakers complained to the prime minister that their DOs were ignored in granting MPO facilities.

On May 10, Hasina tasked her education adviser Alauddin to review the list. On May 31, he came up with the revised list of 1,483 institutions.

It included 600 new institutions and excluded some 140 which were on the previous list.

A number of ministers and lawmakers again complained to the premier that institutions founded by controversial leaders of BNP and Jamaat were also included in the new list. She then asked the education ministry to review the list again.

At the cabinet meeting yesterday, the prime minister directed all the ministers and state ministers to come up with their specific recommendations regarding the government's outline of perspective plan 2010-2021.

The meeting discussed the plan thoroughly and agreed that there must be more specific suggestions on it. Some ministers suggested dropping from the plan the word "revolution" in curbing corruption. But the premier said social revolution is a must to root out corruption.

The cabinet approved the draft Bangladesh Reserved Areas for Tourism and Special Tourism Zones Bill 2010, the prime minister's press secretary Abul Kalam Azad told journalists after the meeting.