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## English-medium schools continue charging extra fees

Staff Correspondent

ENGLISH-MEDIUM schools continue charging annual charges, readmission fees and value-added tax from students as the government is yet to take any step to implement High Court directives in this regard.

The bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Farid Ahmed on June 20 asked the education secretary, the directorate of education director general and the National Board of Revenue to take steps so that the authorities could not realise such charges for the next six months.

The education secretary,

Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, told New Age, 'I have recently received a copy of the High Court directive and forwarded it to the joint secretary (law) to take action against the English-medium schools in keeping with the directive.'

The education ministry's joint secretary (law) Md Rafiqzaman said, 'I am not aware of the High Court directive. If a copy of the directive has been sent to me, it will take time to reach me after the completion of the process.'

The court had passed the order after hearing a public interest litigation writ filed

by Supreme Court lawyer Fatema S Chowdhury challenging the 'arbitrary increase in tuition fees and realisation of money in the guise of the annual charge, readmissions fees and VAT from students.'

'If the authorities do not respond to the directive and the rule, I will inform the court and take initiative so that the writ petition is disposed of expeditiously,' the petitioner's counsel Masood R Sobhan said.

The authorities concerned were also asked to explain in four weeks why they would not be directed to formulate a policy for

English-medium schools to stop them from realising any annual charges and readmission fees.

The court also asked the government to explain why it should not be directed to abolish VAT on tuition fees as the system is contrary to Article 15 of the constitution, which stipulates that providing children with education is a fundamental responsibility of the state.

Some guardians alleged that English-medium school authorities continued realising fees as done earlier on the grounds that they were not aware of the High Court directive.