

70pc secondary schools without internet

Govt introduces ICT as compulsory subject

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THE government has introduced information and communications technology as a subject compulsory for students of Class VI-VII from 2013 although the authorities are yet to equip about 70 per cent of secondary schools and 88 per cent of madrassahs, according to BANBEIS, with internet facilities.

Officials of educational institution management

system of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education said that almost all secondary schools have computers.

But the chief consultant of project updating the curriculum said that there should be internet facilities in the schools. According to the course outline, students should be taught about computer, related devices, internet, mobile and their use.

EIMS officials also said

that about 6,900 out of about 18,000 secondary schools and madrassahs have no position for computer education teachers and 1,914 of the 9,147 existing positions are vacant.

Professor Siddiqur Rahman, the chief consultant of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board who led the team developing the curriculum, told New Age that they had introduced information and communications technology as a com-

pulsory subject for VI and VII students of all mediums. The course will gradually will be made compulsory for students up to Class XII. The subject was introduced for Class VI students in 2012 as an experiment.

'We have introduced information and communications technology as a mandatory subject for students,' he said. 'Computer labs with internet connections will help to attain the target.'

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The Basic Education Statistics 2011 the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics published on October 30, 2012 said that 29.73 per cent of schools and 12.91 per cent of dakhil madrassahs have internet connections.

There are, according to BANBEIS, 15,391 secondary schools and 6,669 dakhil madrassahs, which indicates that 10,773 secondary schools and 5,568 madrassahs have no internet facilities.

The report also said that about 76 per cent of schools and 71 per cent of madrassahs have electric connections.

The education ministry on August 20, 2009 issued

a circular asking all secondary schools to arrange internet facilities by September 15 of the year.

Curriculum planners told New Age that information and communications technology as a subject will give students a primary idea about computer, related devices and their use.

Government officials said that they wanted to provide students with education in IT-enabled services as they would be architects of a modern and digital Bangladesh the government is working on.

The secondary and higher education directorate said that the situation would change before 2013 ends as they will have by then completed the establishment of

multimedia classrooms in 20,500 secondary — 13,700 secondary school and 4,000 madrassahs — and higher secondary educational institutions and each of the institutions would be given a modem.

Some officials, however, were sceptical about the success of the multimedia classroom project, especially in student's use of the internet.

They said that modems and laptops would be given to the schools but they would be used by the teachers and would come of no use to the students.

One of them said that the schools have computers but students are hardly allowed to use them. Only a few schools have computer labs,

he added.

Another concern they raised is frequent power outages, especially in rural areas and in the summer. Such power outages will be hampering ICT classes. There are even some educational institutions which are off-grid and have no other source of electricity.

The joint secretary (secondary) of the education ministry, AS Mahmud, however, said that almost all schools and madrassahs have electric connections and they could use laptops in the case of power outages.

The DSHE director (secondary), Sajal Kanit Mandal, said that they would look into issues of teachers for computer education.