

NATIONAL BUDGET

Education ministry allocation unlikely to increase: Nahid

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ALLOCATION for the education ministry is unlikely to increase in the budget for the 2013-14 financial year, scheduled to be placed in the parliament on June 6.

The annual allocation for the education sector has, however, been gradually decreasing over the past few years although the ruling Awami League promised the highest budgetary allocation for education and science and information technology sectors in its election manifesto.

This will be the last budget of the current Awami League-led government as the government serves out its tenure in January.

Sources said that the size of the national budget for the next financial year would be around Tk 2,24,000 crore.

The education minister, Nurul Islam Nahid, on Tuesday said, 'I do not think that budgetary allocation for the education ministry will increase in the next financial year.'

This allocation was very limited for the tasks to enhance the quality of education, development of infrastructure and others things,' he said.

'We should use the allocation properly. We will not allow irregularities, corruption and unnecessary expenditures in the education sector, which gobbles a part of the budgetary allocation,' Nahid said.

'The country has limited resources and we will try to do everything with the amount we will be given,' he said.

The allocation for education has gradually been decreasing over the past few years. In the 2012-13 budget, subsidies, pension and interest, the allocation for education and information technology accounted for 11 per cent of the total outlay. The figure was 12.4 per cent in the 2011-12 budget and 13.51 per cent in the 2010-11 budget.

The Awami League's election manifesto said, 'In order to ensure human resources development, the highest budg-

etary allocation will be given to education, science and information technology sectors.'

Nahid at a meeting with secondary and higher education directorate, education boards and colleges on Thursday to decide the college admission policy, said that the allocation of only 11 per cent of the total national budget, which accounts for 2.2 per cent of the gross domestic product, was not enough for the sector and the allocation should be increased.

The UNESCO declaration states that the allocation for education should be at least 20 per cent of the national budget and 6 per cent of the gross domestic product.

In terms of the GDP, the budgetary allocation for education is one of the lowest in Bangladesh among South Asian countries.

According to the World Bank, the Maldives spends 10.3 per cent of the GDP on education, Bhutan 4.7 per cent, Nepal 4.6 per cent, Pakistan 2.4 per cent and India 3.3 per cent.