

HSC QUESTION LEAK

Govt opens probe

No headway in past investigations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two separate probe committees were formed yesterday to investigate the question leak of English second paper test of Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) exam under Dhaka Education Board.

The education ministry formed a seven-member committee led by its Additional Secretary Sohrab Hossain. The committee was asked to submit its report in 15 working days. Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told reporters at his secretariat office.

Earlier yesterday, the Dhaka Education Board formed a five-member committee headed by its Secretary Abdus Salam Hawlader.

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The leak of question papers of public exams has become a recurring phenomenon in recent times, with the government apparently failing to take protective measures to stop the menace.

A syndicate has been involved with leaking questions and circulates questions of different exams through SMS of mobile phones, sources said.

Allegations are rife that question papers in the recently held SSC exams were reportedly leaked, but the government rejected the claim without going for any further investigation.

In November last year, the questions of some papers of Junior School Certificate Examination were leaked at many places, but the Dhaka Board's probe committee did not find any proof of leakage.

The question papers of last year's Primary Terminal Examination were also leaked. The ministry's probe committee found proof of leakage of English and Bangla papers in four districts.

But it did not cancel the examinations.

Yesterday, the board postponed the English second paper exam over the question leak. The examination will now be held on June 8 at 10:00am with fresh question papers.

Dhaka board officials, on condition of anonymity, said they came to know about the leaked question paper on Wednesday afternoon.

"Initially we received phone calls about the leaked question paper. But we got a copy of the leaked question via fax around 8:00pm yesterday [Wednesday]. The fax copy matched the real one and we postponed the exam," said a top official.

He said moderation committees had prepared several sets of question papers and two sets were selected through lottery for printing. "We are really in the dark as to who had leaked the questions."

A number of guardians said the question paper of the English first paper had also been leaked and many

of them had got the questions through SMS (short messaging service) two days before the exam.

Prof Taslima Begum, chairman of the Dhaka board, told The Daily Star that the probe committee formed by the board would submit its report in 15 working days.

Talking to reporters at the Secretariat, Nahid said, "The high-powered committee [formed by the ministry] will investigate the allegations and make specific recommendations on what needs to be done."

It would also recommend measures for security of question papers of all public exams under the ministry so that such incidents do not recur, he added.

"The committee will find out who were involved with this leak and we will take stern action against them."

The minister also said, "We won't tolerate it as we have taken so many initiatives to improve the standard of education. We won't allow any misdeeds which will ruin all these efforts."