

Classes 3 days online, 3 days in person

Govt pilots hybrid model in selected Dhaka schools

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Photo: Arafat Rahaman.

The government is set to introduce a blended model in selected schools in Dhaka from tomorrow, under which students will attend online classes for three days and physical classes for three days each week.

The decision was taken in view of the global energy crisis, severe traffic congestion, and the growing need to adapt to a technology-based education system, Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon said at a press briefing at the International Mother Language Institute yesterday afternoon.



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Blended online-offline classes for six days a week under consideration:
Education minister

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EDUCATION MINISTER ANM EHSANUL HOQUE MILON

Under the arrangement, students will attend physical classes on Saturdays, Mondays, and Wednesdays, while they will have online classes on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

Calling it a limited pilot initiative rather than a pandemic-style restriction, Milon said, “It is not a pandemic-era measure. We are not forcing it.” He added that the system would initially be introduced in selected institutions.

Primary schools will remain outside the arrangement for now, he said, adding that a decision on them would be taken after further discussion.

According to the ministry, the new model will be launched at institutions such as Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, Rajuk Uttara Model College, and Residential Model School and College, among others.

The ministry, however, did not publish an official list of the institutions as of yesterday. The minister said the plan was intended for well-established schools with large student populations, particularly those to which many students commute by car.

He said that institutions with the capacity to adopt the system would be able to join voluntarily.

Teachers will be required to remain present at their respective institutions even while conducting online classes, he said, adding that the government would take steps to address technical challenges, including improving internet connectivity and Wi-Fi facilities.

At the briefing, teachers stressed the need for uninterrupted power supply, internet access, and proper monitoring to ensure students' participation.

Asked about English-medium schools, where O-level and A-level examinations are scheduled from July, with authorities reluctant to move online, Milon said he had already discussed the matter with all stakeholders.

This move comes despite concerns raised by students and guardians at a seminar on Wednesday attended by educationists, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders.

Kamal Hossain, a student of Nayatola Anwarul Ulum Numania Model Kamil Madrasa, said online classes could increase students' dependence on mobile phones and encourage distractions such as social media and gaming.



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Hybrid classes planned for Dhaka schools: Milon

Fahmida Akter, a guardian of a student at Motijheel Ideal School and College, said many families do not have access to quality smartphones needed for platforms such as Zoom, making online classes difficult.

Shahida Begum, a guardian of a ninth-grader at Shah Ali High Girls' School in Mirpur, said reducing classroom hours would be better than shifting to online classes, as students would still be able to study directly at school.

On March 31, the minister first mentioned introducing a mix of online and in-person classes for schools in metropolitan areas. At the time, he said a survey had found that around 55 percent of respondents supported some form of online education.