

Falling interest rate to hit girls' stipend programme

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FALLING interest has poised to affect the stipend programme run by the ministry of education mainly for girls and female students.

Ministry officials said the education ministry had been running the programme since 2012-13 with the fund derived from interest for Tk 1,000 crore it kept as fixed deposit in the state-owned commercial banks.

The education ministry was given Tk 1,000 crore as seed money from the exchequer to run the programme supervised by the Education Assistance Trust headed by the prime minister.

The officials said that the interest rate of the five fixed deposits in five state-owned banks was 12.50 per cent in 2012-13 which was dropped

at 5.5 per cent in the current financial year.

State-owned commercial banks like Sonali, Janata, Agrani, Rupali and BASIC banks have been lowering the interest rates on saving schemes since 2015 because surplus liquidity of more than Tk 25,000 crore in the banking channel during that period.

The education ministry received dividend of Tk 104 crore from the fixed deposits in 2012-13.

It assessed that the amount would fall to Tk 86 crore in the current financial year causing a shortfall of Tk 40 crore to pay the stipend to the targeted students.

In 2015-16, the education ministry spent Tk 120 crore for the purpose.

On August 9, education minister Narul Islam Nahid

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Falling interest rate

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 in a letter to the finance minister highlighted the issue.

He sought assistance from the finance ministry in the current financial year for

smooth operation of the programme.

The finance ministry officials said the education ministry was facing problem because of falling interest rate as they failed increase

the seed money.

They said that the education ministry was supposed to add additional fund to the seed money on their own efforts.

More than 10 lakh

students mostly females between Class-VI and graduate level received the stipend worth over Tk 396 crore under the programme between 2012-13 and 2015-16.