

New twist in question leak, govt left with old task

QUESTION paper leak in the ongoing Secondary School Certificate examinations took a new turn, with the multiple-choice questions along with their answers being available on Facebook and WhatsApp groups an hour before the Bangladesh and global studies examination on Saturday. The part of the questions was found to be doing the rounds on social networking sites and the questions, and even their order, matched the question paper students were given in the examinations halls. So far since the beginning of the examinations on February 1, question papers have been leaked on all examination days. While the government are taking steps, one after another, requiring coaching centres to remain closed during the examinations duration, students to take seats in the examinations half an hour before the schedule and careful handling of the packets of question papers and entailing a ban on the use of mobiles in a periphery of 200 metres of the examinations centres, the nuisance does not seem to come to an end. And while the situation continues to question the credibility of the public examinations, the steps that the government is taking do not seem to be getting at the root.

The problem perhaps lies elsewhere for which all such government steps fail to improve on the situation. The foremost of the problem is that the government seems to be in denial about the question paper leak. With students and their guardians coming up with allegations of question paper leak all along, the government has so far brushed aside the allegations. The chairman of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka, who is coordinator of all education boards, as New Age reported on Sunday, too brushed aside such allegations. Law enforcers, on the other front, on Saturday arrested at least nine people suspected of being involved in question paper leak, taking the number of people arrested centring on the matter to 95 after the examinations began. The government needs to address this stark dichotomy if it is sincere about ending the menace of question paper leak. The Secondary and Higher Education secretary, however, sought to say that it was not possible to stop questions from being leaked in the existing examination system. But for what the government is planning, a court order for the government to set up a judicial investigation of the question paper leaks remains the other ray of hope. While the government should carry out the task earnestly, it should also make the investigation report public so that citizens can know what has been going for quite a few years in this matter.

It is, therefore, high time that the government judiciously looked into the issue of public examinations question paper leak and, taking all stakeholders on board, make a detailed analysis to find out what has gone wrong. The government must make a course correction as the menace questions the national education system.

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