

## Primary Education Act will go ?

By A.F.M.S. DOWLAH

A decision has been taken at the highest level to repeal the Primary Education Act, 1982, according to competent sources.

The implementation of the decision is being delayed because the authorities have not yet been able to work out an alternative legal framework for the administration of primary education, the sources said.

Exercises on a possible legal framework, either in the form of an ordinance or an executive order, are now in progress, the sources said.

Meanwhile, the education minister announced on May 31 that the Local Education Authority (LEA) would be abolished, and the management of primary education would be vested with the upgraded Thana administration.

This announcement is the first public indication that existing Primary Education Act would be repealed.

The sources said, the government believed that the existing Act was "inadequate to meet the needs of the time." The government, they added, wanted to bring the administration and management of primary education under the purview of administrative decentralization program.

The Thana Parishad Ordinance, 1982 also empowers the Thana Nirbahi Officers to administer local primary education.

The primary schools were nationalised almost by a single stroke of pen in 1974 and the primary

## Primary education

From Page 1

teachers were extended even rationing facilities subsequently. But president Zia's government sought to bring the management of the schools under local management, more particularly under the Gram Sarkars.

But the primary teachers repulsed that attempt through a movement that rocked the Dhaka city; and they were ultimately able to retain their government servant status and compelled the government to withdraw local management.

Repeal of the Act, which was the outcome of the movement, now leaves the teachers in doubt about their service conditions—

whether they will remain government servants or not. The education minister, however, in his recent public addresses gave them the assurance that status quo would be maintained.

In the absence of the Act, primary education and its teachers will be, it appears, managed by the Thana Nirbahi Officers in the upgraded thanas, but the guidelines or rules of business in this regard still remain to be framed.

According to the sources, the promulgation of an Ordinance or an executive order replacing the Act may be delayed till upgradation of thanas is completed.