

Music, physical training cannot be sacrificed

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THIS is disheartening that the primary and mass education ministry has rescinded the newly established positions for music and physical training teachers in government primary schools. The decision, effected by changing the Government Primary School Teacher Recruitment Rules 2025, represents not merely a bureaucratic adjustment but a stark affront to the rights and holistic development of children. Initially announced in late August, the creation of assistant teacher's position for music and physical training was meant to enrich the primary curriculum, recognising that the cultivation of artistic and physical skills demands dedicated expertise. Within weeks, the announcement drew criticism from various right-wing forces that have urged the government to replace the positions with the position of teachers for religious instruction. By capitulating to the demands, the government has now undermined the pedagogical principle that children's comprehensive development including exposure to music, movement and creative expression should supersede sectarian lobbying. Experts have condemned the decision as a deliberate compromise of

children's wellbeing and a perilous repetition of political patterns that prioritise ideological appeasement over the cultivation of a well-rounded, culturally literate citizenry.

This reversal is not an isolated aberration but a continuation of a disquieting pattern in the governance, which contravenes both the spirit of the independence and the transformative ideals embodied in the 2024 mass uprising. Right-wing forces have exerted undue influence over policy decisions and this latest capitulation starkly exposes the peril such influence poses to democratic governance. The interim government, which frequently talks of a democratising process, has paradoxically yielded to right-wing pressure, privileging ideological conformity over the educational and cultural rights of the children. Such interference is dangerous, undemocratic, eroding confidence in institutions tasked with fostering critical thinking, creativity and civic awareness from an early age. The abrupt elimination of initiatives such as music and physical training posts signals a regression not only in pedagogy but also in the societal commitment to pluralism, cultural enrichment and intellectual liberty. If allowed to persist, this pattern risks entrenching a narrow, exclusionary vision of citizenship, fundamentally at odds with constitutional rights, democratic principles and the aspirations of a forward-looking nation. The decision illustrates a troubling prioritisation of ideological appeasement over children's holistic development and the long-term cultural and intellectual health of society.

The government should urgently reverse this decision and reaffirm its commitment to holistic education, ensuring that children have access to music, physical training and all forms of creative learning. Protecting cultural rights and fostering intellectual growth cannot be subordinate to ideological pressure. A clear, decisive stance is essential to safeguard and uphold the democratic and educational principles.