

## English medium schools prove their worth

*Impelling need for rational policy*

**E**VERY year as we bring into national focus the outstanding 'O' and 'A' level results of our children, we rejoice in the heights that sons and daughters of the soil are scaling in a competitive world despite the limitations at home. The sheer brilliance of their achievement comes through the scorecard: 640 students of 'O' level achieved six or more As and 243 'A' level students score minimum of three As. To top it off, 55 'O' and 'A' level students top-scored in their subjects on a global basis.

The critics of English medium schools are apt to say that they are elitist while the proponents see the merit in pursuing the courses that better equip students to pursue higher studies abroad. We are for a realistic and rational approach to the whole issue. The elitist label no longer holds good as it used to. Local cultural and educational ingredients are being integrated into the English medium curriculum. Secondly, Bangla is being taught in the schools. There is a vast scope though to be more inclusive of local contents that would instill greater attachment to the country. The English taught in Bengali-medium schools and Bengali taught in English-medium schools should be of comparable standards, neither language being given a short shrift.

Presumably, on account of their being 'elitist', they are being forced to pay Vat. Why this discrimination? Of course, there are schools that are an apology for English medium schools and that many schools charge extremely high fees. There is the need for standardising them. And the schools that charge high fees are required to project a service mentality image rather than a high profit motive.

But can we deny the fact that English medium schools sprang up out of sheer necessity and longing for it? Our award giving ceremony in a way bears testimony to this. Whereas nine years ago when we began it, 200 students met our criterion, but now it is a stunning number of 1,000 high achievers receiving the well deserved accolade. By testing their merit in global examination, they have achieved feats that are comparable with others. This is a tribute to the intrinsic talent of our boys and girls which we would like to see bloom as thousand flowers to the glory of our country.