

# INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

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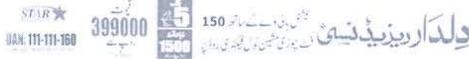
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## 'Govt should focus on drop-out cases at schools'

Tuesday, October 06, 2009  
By our correspondent

Karachi

The government should focus on the enrolment problems and dropout cases at the schools, given that the situation is alarming with a 40 per cent dropout rate, giving Pakistan the second highest dropout rate in the region, Dr Shamsi Kassim Lakha, a veteran government and education policymaker and former President of the Aga Khan University said during a symposium on Monday.

The National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) and Department of Education Sindh in collaboration with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) held a symposium to mark 'World Teachers' Day' at a local hotel. The theme of the event was 'Engaging teachers' associations for achieving MDGs - Universal Primary Education'.

Dr Lakha also said that there was a need of intellectual dialogue to address the matter as resources were available. He appreciated the government's plan to increase the education budget to seven per cent of total gross domestic product (GDP) till 2015.

"The problem in our system is that new governments came into power and stop the projects run by the previous rulers. Despite political differences, good projects must continue to benefit the people," he advised. He also emphasised on addressing teachers' salary issues and other problems they.

The chief guest, Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Qaim Ali Shah, lauded the role and efforts of the teachers' union and termed them the backbone of a sustainable educational revolution.

Despite demands by the teachers and teachers association present in a symposium to increase the pay scale, Shah said that a committee was drafted and it would report within three weeks time. The recommendations would be accepted and implemented immediately, adding that, the committee would consist of a member each from finance, education department, NCHD and private sector. He also announced Rs2.5 million for NCHD.

Chairperson, NCHD, Nafisa Shah said that Pakistan must realise the cherished dream of achieving the desired literacy rate in the country by the year 2015. According to her, in 20 years of the democratic governments, Pakistan achieved a total of 33 per cent increase in literacy whereas during more than 42 years of martial law there was only 23 per cent increase in literacy.

"We need proper implementation of the policies to achieve the goals and serious steps are to be taken in this regard, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Shahnaz Wazir Ali", said.

There must be proper checks on teachers' attendance, urgent arrangement for missing facilities at schools and transport allowances for the teachers and appointment of 70 per cent female teachers as PMTs are some suggestions for the education department, she further said.

Senior Minister for Education, Pir Mazhar ul Haq, said that a joint database was required to find out the problems and NCHD must engage Director Literacy Programme to sort it out.

On the occasion, shields were distributed among the best teachers of each district of Sindh for their efforts: Agha Shaheen Farhat, Principal of Government Boys Delhi Extension, Primary School, Azzabab and a male teacher won awards for Karachi.

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