

Strike unjust, unfair : Badruddoza Teachers demands to be considered : Sircar

By A Staff Reporter

Deputy Leader of the House Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury described the on-going strike by non-government teachers keeping the degree examinees "hostage", as unjust and unfair.

The Deputy Leader was giving a reply to criticism of the government by Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina who took the floor in violation of the rules of procedure after a statement made by the Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar under Rule 300.

Dr. Chowdhury said the government has not rejected by the demands of the teachers. But, he said, it needs more time to find out

the source of money required to meet their demand. He said the people have entrusted the responsibility with the present government to manage the country's resources for the greater good.

As the Leader of the Opposition made a comment describing the government "a bad manager", the Deputy Leader of the House emphatically said, "this government is a very good manager" of people's money. "This government does not believe in satisfying anyone out of the way or making any stunt.

Referring to the strike by teachers, the Deputy Leader said
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all quarters including the Treasury Bench and the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad should have opposed the strike. "But there is a lack of courage to tell the 'truth amongst some of us," he added.

Refuting the allegations made by Sheikh Hasina that the Prime Minister manages six offices, Dr. Chowdhury said such allegations were baseless.

Referring to the violation of the rules of procedures of the House, the Deputy Leader felt that everyone in the House should go by the laid down rules.

Earlier, taking the floor as the Education Minister concluded his statement on the teachers' strike and Degree examination scheduled to begin today, (Monday) Sheikh Hasina argued that reasons such as inflation and price hike shown to raise the salary and allowances of the President through the adoption of a bill, were also applicable to the non-government teachers who, she said, played a glorious role during the anti-autocracy movement. She alleged that the Prime Minister maintained six offices for herself.

The Leader of the Opposition advised the ruling BNP not to show "autocratic" mentality and appealed for considering the demand of the striking teachers.

She said the teacher community has resorted to strike because of the rigid attitude of the government. She also urged the government not to hold Degree examinations under police supervision.

Halfway through the statement of the Leader of the Opposition, Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali reminded her that no question can be asked by any member regarding a statement made by a Minister under Rule 300 of the Rules of Procedures. But Sheikh Hasina continued her statement.

After the statement made by Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury in reply to leader of the Opposition's criticism of the government, Deputy leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad wanted to speak, but the Speaker firmly refused to give him floor.

BSS adds: Earlier, making a statement Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar called upon the teachers, students, guardians and Members of Parliament to extend

their cooperation towards peaceful and smooth holding of the Degree Examinations beginning today. The Education Minister said the government was sympathetic about their legitimate demands and those would be duly considered.

He hoped that nobody would take any measure which would be detrimental to the future of the degree examinees.

The Education Minister informed the House that he had meetings with different teachers organisations on Saturday regarding their strike. Addhakhaya Parishad, Bangladesh College Shikkhak Samity, Bangladesh Shikkhak Samity, Karmachari Federation, Bangladesh Shikkhak Samity Oikkay Front, Sarkari College Provashak Samity and others joined the first meeting with the Minister held between 5 pm and 7 pm.

The second meeting with the Minister was held between 7 pm and 10 pm with Shikkhak Samity, Shikkhak Samity Federation, College-Bishwabiddhalaya Shikkhak Samity and other teachers' organisations attending.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Choudhury, Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia and State Minister for Law and Justice Aminul Haq were present during the meetings.

Referring to the teachers' trust fund, he said it's operation was being kept withheld from the time of Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmad.

The Education Minister said Taka 122 crore to 125 crore would be needed for meeting the demands of the teachers. He anticipated that Madrasha teachers would raise their demands if the demands of the teachers were met. As the money required for meeting the demands of teachers are not included in the current budget, he said, imposition of new taxes would be required for this purpose.

Mr. Sircar said it would not be proper for the government which came to power 11 months back to impose new taxes at this phase of the fiscal year.

He said, if necessary, the issue could be discussed in Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education Ministry.