

Hiking tuition fees

Ministry should rethink proposal

We fail to understand why the ministry of education has suggested that private educational institutions whether under Monthly Pay Order (MPO) scheme or otherwise, may raise school fees up to 30 per cent. This question is particularly relevant since the ministry had asked private schools and colleges not to raise fees in an ad hoc manner last February. Many schools went ahead and raised fees anywhere between 50 to 100 percent in January citing higher "salary" for teachers. And although we have been told that no private educational institution can raise fees beyond the slated 30 percent, our experience shows that the governing bodies of these institutions do what they please without having to answer to any authority.

The second question that has been posed by guardians is what correlation is there between teachers' salary and the new pay scale for civil servants? Why is the ministry suggesting increase in the tuition fees by a third without taking into account how parents will pay for this massive jump? While salaries have risen for members of the government service, that is not the case for the rest of the people in the economy who belong mostly to the fixed income group.

The circular in itself is not entirely clear. The 30 percent hike in fees will be for how many years is not stated. It is feared that the circular will encourage governing bodies of schools and colleges to do as they please. Any revision of the fees' structure must be discussed with all stakeholders, as the ministry's circular stipulates, prior to implementation. While we want the teachers of private institutions to be well paid, the hike in tuition fees must follow a rationale.