

/PAY SCALE DISPARITIES

Protests of univ teachers, govt officers continue enters 7th day

Staff Correspondent

PUBLIC university teachers and aggrieved government officers continued work abstention for the seventh consecutive day today, demanding removal of disparities from the new pay structure.

Indefinite work abstention by about 15,000 teachers already paralysed the 37 public universities of the country, while two-hour

work abstention by government officials including doctors, engineers, agriculturists and government officials continued to hamper treatment at public hospitals, academic activities at government colleges and day-to-day activities at government offices across the country.

The weeklong protest by aggrieved government officers including engineers, doctors, agriculturists as well as the members of 26 out the 28 cadres of Bangladesh Civil Service is scheduled for today to conclude and they are likely to announce next course of action.

Restoration of the timescales and the selection grades, which used to facilitate moving on to higher scales and grades of pay, is the common demand of all the protesting groups.

Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Associations leaders said that they

would submit a proposal to the education ministry today for a quick solution to the crisis that was leading students to an uncertainty.

'We will continue our demonstration and discussions simultaneously until our demands are met. We want retention of the timescales and the selection grades and salaries for a certain percentage of university professors equal to that of senior secretaries,' said federation-secretary general ASM Maksud Kamal.

No classes would also be held for two hours today as usual in 320 government colleges because of the work abstention by members of BCS education cadre in protest against the new pay structure that abolished the provision of timescales and selection grades.

All the groups feel aggrieved over the disparities created in the new pay struc-

ture denying them of their existing benefits and choking their future opportunities and prospects.

They said that the timescales and the selection grades were the best safeguards for most of them enjoying limited or no opportunities of promotion.

* The new pay structure blocked their movement on to higher pay scales and grades while offering no promotions as remedies, several agitating officers alleged.

'We will continue the two-hour work abstention today. The aggrieved officers will as usual hold protests inside their offices wearing black badges,' said Md Firoz Khan, the member-secretary of the steering committee formed by the four groups.

He said that the steering committee representing officers from 26 BCS cadres and the professional groups would sit today to decide the

next course of action as there was no headway so far in discussions with the government for their demands.

Removal of inter-cadre disparities is another important demand for cadre service officers who feel discriminated due to better opportunities offered to the administrative and the foreign service officials.

The work abstention by teachers was putting an adverse impact on about 15 lakh students while 1.8 lakh public university students were kept off the classrooms for a week because of the indefinite strike by the university teachers, said officials concerned. The teachers of several universities, however, took scheduled semester final exams.

University teachers also demanded either a separate pay structure for them or the restoration of selection grades and timescales.

They also pressed for the pay, perks and status equal to 'senior secretaries' for a certain percentage of the senior university teachers.

The professional groups and the BCS Coordination Committee began their protests under a common banner in October. Their seven-point demands also include removal of cadre and non-cadre disparities.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Teachers' Association on Saturday held a rally and brought out a silent procession demanding removal of disparities from the new pay structure, said a release.

JL Correspondent reported that eleven departments of Jahangirnagar University suspended the ongoing final exams amidst the non-stop work abstention by the teachers halting academic activities and creating a fear of prolonged student life.