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## Non-govt teachers threaten strike from April 18

Non-government secondary school and college teachers Tuesday threatened to go on strike from April 18 to press home their 4-point demand, reports UNB.

The call for indefinite strike weeks before the SSC examinations scheduled for May 2 came from a rally in front of the National Press Club which was attended by thousands of teachers

braving scorching heat of the high noon.

The demands include similar financial benefits given to government school and college teachers, implementation of recommendations of the high powered committee set up by the Prime Minister, security of job ensured by law and equal teaching facilities extended to government school and colleges.

Some 1.75 lakh teachers are engaged in about 11,000 non-government secondary schools and 640 colleges in the country.

They say the pay packet of government teachers is nearly double their counterparts in non-government schools and colleges, besides festival bonus, pension and gratuity on retirement.

The Central Teachers action Liaison Committee which organised the rally in a declaration claimed 85 per cent of the government allocation on education for non-government schools and colleges which have 85 per cent of the total students.

The declaration also called for government expenditure of 7 per cent of the GDP on education sector as suggested by the UNESCO.

Officials estimate the government expenditure on education sector at 3 per cent of GDP but the teachers say it is less than 2 per cent.

The leaders of the Liaison Committee addressing the rally expressed the desire for dialogue with the government indicating that their demands were negotiable.

Convenor of the Liaison Committee Mohammad Kamruzzaman who presided over the rally asked the teachers to remain united for realising their genuine demands.

He was critical of the government which, he said, backed out of its commitment in 1992 to redress the grievances of the teachers within two months.

Among others who spoke at the rally were Mansurur Rahman, Abdur Rab Mia, Shahidur Rahman, A K M Zahirul Islam, Asadul Haq, Azizul Haq Shah, Abdus Salam, Chowdhury Khurshid Alam and Mrs Hena Das.