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Non-govt teachers being used for political ends

By A Staff Reporter

Education Minister Barrister Zamir Uddin Sircar Sunday alleged in the Jatiya Sangsad that non-government school and college teachers were being used by certain quarters to achieve their political ends.

Post and Telecommunication Minister Tariqul Islam said during the latest talk with the leaders of the teachers on Friday the government offered a 5 per cent hike in its contribution to the salary of the non-government teachers this year and another five per cent during the next year's budget. He said leaders of the teachers failed to turn up to a meeting with the Prime Minister arranged at their teachers' request on Friday last.

The two ministers were making separate statements in the Jatiya Sangsad when BNP member Abdul Ali Mridha drew the attention of the Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni, who was presiding over the sitting, to the teachers' sit-in demonstration.

The Education Minister said presence of Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and Jatiya Party and Workers Party leaders at the sit-in demonstration proved that teachers' movement was politically motivated.

Barrister Sircar reiterated his appeal to the teachers to call off their strike and devote themselves in the task of spreading education.

The Education Minister said that those who were misleading the teachers would ultimately be exposed to the nation. He said that the present government after the announcement of the new pay scale had increased its contribution to the salaries of the non-government teachers from 50 per cent to 70 per cent.

When they put forward fresh demands, the Education Minister said, the government had met their all demands barring two. Those two demands were: Payment of full salary of the non-government teachers from

the government exchequer and raising the age-limit for retirement of teachers to 70 years. He said that the teachers had not received in last 20 years what they were now getting.

The Education Minister pointed out that the Prime Minister had provided Tk. 25 crore for the benevolent fund so that teachers did not return home empty handed after their retirement. Each of the retiring teachers would be receiving gratuity equivalent to one month's basic pay for every year of his service from the benevolent fund, he said.

Barrister Sircar said the government had also provided the non-government teachers with a monthly medical allowance equivalent to that enjoyed by teachers of government schools and colleges. Besides, he said, the present government had given time scale facilities to non-government teachers.

Barrister Sircar said during negotiations with the leaders of the teachers, the government had told them their demands would be met in phases.

He regretted that despite enhanced benefits given to them, a section of teachers took students hostage during their last SSC examination. However, he said, a group of sensible teachers had performed their duties during the SSC examinations.

A confident Education Minister said like successful holding of the last SSC examinations, the HSC examinations would be held in time and results announced as scheduled.

TARIQUL

Mr Tariqul Islam who took part in the negotiations with the teachers said that during a meeting with the leaders of the striking teachers and the government in response to the demand for raising the government contribution to the

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teachers' salary by another 10 per cent, agreed to make a 5 per cent raise during the current year's budget and another 5 per cent in the next year's budget.

All leaders of the teachers demanded a meeting with the Prime Minister in this respect. But Mr Quamruzzaman, an Awami League Presidium Member and a leader of the teachers had said they needed a meeting among themselves first.

The Telecommunication Minister said that the Prime Minister had agreed to meet the leaders of the teachers and time was fixed at 8.30 p.m. but later they had failed to turn up.

Mr Islam said that it appeared that certain quarters prevailed upon them.

He said that deposed autocrat Ershad had been the President of the Non-government Teachers' Association and Ershad had announced that he would give Tk. one crore to the benevolent fund of the teachers. But not even a Taka was given by him, the Telecommunication Minister said.

But, he said, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had given Tk. 25 crore to the benevolent fund.

Referring to the address given by Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and Jatiya Party leader Kazi Zafar Ahmed

at the sit-in demonstration of the teachers. Mr Islam said, "Mr Quamruzzaman is a member of the Awami League Presidium and Kazi Faruq Ahmed (a leader of the teachers' action liaison committee) is the brother of Kazi Zafar Ahmed. So there is no reason to be surprised if Sheikh Hasina or Kazi Zafar Ahmed or Moudud Ahmed addresses the sit-in demonstration of teachers."

The Telecommunications Minister urged the teachers not to be misled by politically motivated quarters and carry out their responsibility to their beloved students.