

Teachers find loss in govt's salary hike

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Teachers of non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas will actually suffer financial loss due to the October 31 circular announcing the government salary increase to 100 per cent as it put the condition of depositing the students' tuition fees to the government fund.

The government at present pays 90 per cent of the basic salary of the non-government teachers and employees.

The government will have to spend Tk 400 crore annually while around Tk 800 crore is usually collected as tuition fees, said Bangladesh Shikhhak-Karmachari Oikya Parishad, a platform of eight organisations of teachers and employees.

According to Educational Institution Survey (Post Primary)-2005, the total annual income of the non-government educational institutions in 2005 was Tk 39.36 billion (3,936 crore) of which Tk 793 crore 28 lakh and 43 thousand had been collected as tuition fees.

Discontent has emerged once again among the teachers following the issue of the circular. They termed the circular a 'bluff' and held immediate past education minister Dr Osman Farruk responsible for it.

Teachers of renowned non-government high schools and colleges in the capital have already expressed serious dissatisfaction over the government's attaching condition.

The cost of electricity, water and

educational instruments is to be paid usually from the tuition fee they said.

"How will we bear such costs we have to deposit tuition fees? For this reason, we want to get our job out of the purview of the MP (monthly pay order)," said Prof Rafiq Afroj, a teacher of Ispahani Girls School and College.

Rejecting the government offer to raise their salary to 100 per cent on condition of depositing the tuition fees to the public exchequer, most of the associations of teachers and employees of non-government educational institutions said they will agree to deposit the tuition fees if the government nationalises the non-government institutions.

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After a month-long strike of the non-government teachers and employees demanding salary hike, the then education minister Dr Osman Farruk on August 6 announced raising their salary to 100 per cent from the existing 90 per cent but tagged it with the condition of submitting the tuition fees to the government coffers.

Later, in the face of teachers' agitation, Osman Farruk decided in principle to withdraw the condition. But the October 31 circular did not drop the condition.

According to the circular, non-government teachers will get 100 per cent basic salary from the national exchequer. Half of the increased salary will be given from FY 2006 from the budget of 2006-07 fiscal year (FY) and the rest half will be given as 'outstanding bill' from the budget of 2007-08 FY.

But the educational institutions will have to deposit the tuition fees to the government exchequer and a policy for this will have to be prepared within the next three months, the circular said.

Terming the condition a farce, leaders of different teachers' organisations vowed not to deposit a single penny to the public exchequer and declared fresh agitations.

"We demand amendment to the circular and issuance of a new one within seven days," said Quazi Faruque Ahmed, chief coordinator and convener of National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE), a platform of 11 organisations of teachers and employees.

They have already submitted a five-point education reform pro-

posal to the caretaker government and urged forming an enquiry committee against Osman Farruk for 'cheating' with the teachers, he said.

NFTE has also held rallies, brought out processions in the capital on November 8 and submitted a five-point education reform proposal to the President and Chief Adviser to the caretaker government Iajuddin Ahmed on November 9. NFTE may declare tough agitation programmes like strike from November 27.

The October 31 circular had been prepared by Dr Osman Farruk and issued after the expiry of BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government on October 29, said Prof Mazharul Hannan, a leader of Shikhhak Karmachari Oikya Parishad.

This was done to relieve the former education minister of the blame of double-dealing with the teachers, he added.

Prof MA Awal Siddique, convener of Bangladesh Shikhhak-Karmachari Oikya Parishad, said they have already submitted an eight-point education reform proposal to the caretaker government protesting the circular that imposed an 'unacceptable' condition.

"The amount of tuition fees will be a lot more higher than the government's salary increase offer and so teachers can not accept the government's condition," he said.

Over five lakh teachers and employees are on the payrolls of more than 26,000 non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas in the country.