

VCs warn of instability at campuses if demands of teachers not met

Staff Correspondent

VICE-CHANCELLORS of public universities feared instability at the campuses if the teachers demand for a separate pay scale and removal of disparity in salaries between teachers and equivalent status civil servants.

The vice-chancellors under the banner of Association of Universities of Bangladesh warned about the instability at a meeting with education minister Nurul Islam Nahid on Wednesday. The vice-chancellors said protests would begin if the pay scale is implemented without considering the teachers' demands.

Vice-chancellors also demanded proper place in the

warrant of precedence for university vice-chancellors.

Leaders of the association handed over a letter to the minister containing their demands. They also supported four-point demands of university teachers under the banner of Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association.

The university teachers' four-point demand include senior professors and professors be remunerated at par with senior secretaries and secretaries, the pay for associate and assistant professors and lecturers be rationalised according to the professors' grade, benefits enjoyed by a government official of the same grade be accorded to teachers,

and proper place in the warrant of precedence for teachers.

Teachers said the 8th pay commission proposed 16 different grades, where four grades were created for secretary-level officials, upgrading them over university professors, but the university teachers were deprived of selection grade.

The teachers' federation has been protesting against the pay scale and so far held sit-in and work abstention and warned further programmes.

Rajshahi University VC Muhammad Mizanuddin at the meeting said that the universities would become

unstable if the pay scale was not reviewed. Steps should

be taken to avoid that, he warned.

Jahangirnagar University vice-chancellor Farzana Islam said that positions in different campus were volatile.

Proposed pay was a conspiracy against university teachers, said Begum Rokuya University VC AKM Nurun Nabi.

Noakhali Science and Technology University VC M Wahiduzzaman demanded separate pay scale for teachers in line with Awami League government's election pledges.

Dhaka University VC AAMS Arefin Siddique told the meeting that he hoped the issues would be resolved through discussions.

Nahid said that the new pay scale was not final, so the teachers need not take the trouble of taking to the streets.

Nahid said that he had sent separate demi-official letters to the secretary of the President's Office, principal secretary of the Prime Minister's Office, cabinet secretary, senior secretary of public administration and finance ministry calling for formation of separate pay scale for teachers, putting university teachers in their rightful place in the warrant of precedence.

'I have talked with prime minister [Sheikh Hasina] about the teachers' demand and she said she would think about it,' he said.