

## Govt sincerely considering pay scale demands

*Nahid tells public university teachers; assistant govt primary school teachers suspend movement*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday urged protesting teachers of public universities and government colleges to have faith in the government as it was sincerely thinking over their demands, including that for a separate pay scale.

Meanwhile, assistant teachers of government primary schools suspended their movement following Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman's assurance that a cabinet committee would look into their six-point demand including upgrading their status.

Nahid too hoped that the recently reconstituted committee, headed by Finance Minister AMA Muhith, will hear the demands of the university and college teachers once Muhith returns from abroad and there would be a proper solution.

Mostafizur's assurance came at a meeting in his residence on Thursday with a delegation of Primary

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Assistant Teachers' Association, which has been demonstrating for the last few weeks.

Nahid was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the 4th National Conference of Teachers at the Ahsanullah University of Science & Technology (Aust) in the capital's Tejgaon.

Bangladesh Literacy Association (BLA) in association with Dhaka Ahsania Mission, the Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) and Aust organised the two-day conference.

Teachers of all 37 public universities under the banner of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association have been staging protests since May to press home the demands.

They issued an ultimatum on Tuesday, threatening to abstain from work for an indefinite period from November 1 if their demands are not met by then.

Around 300 teachers from around the country joined yesterday's conference where the issues including role of teachers in ensuring quality education, exercising on proper teaching-learning processes and use of ICT in education would be discussed.

Addressing the conference as the chief guest, Nahid said, "You have to keep faith that certainly the government, honourable prime minister, and of course we all have respect for you."

He said teachers were the most respected people in society and the main driving force in education and that the government would do everything possible to uphold their interests and dignity.

"I keep regular contact with them (teachers). I hold meetings and inform the government and others concerned. I hope the problems will be solved," he said.

Nahid thanked the university teachers for taking admission tests amid their movement.

Campe Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury said there should not be any compromise with the teachers' salary and dignity.

Prof Emeritus Manzoor Ahmed of Brac University presented a keynote on "Teachers for the 21st Century" while Aust Vice-Chancellor Prof AMM Safiullah, Dhaka Ahsania Mission President Kazim Rafiqul Alam and BLA General Secretary Prof Nurul Islam also spoke.