

MPO-LISTED SCHOOLS, COLLEGES

# Now govt to hire teachers

40,000 posts vacant in 30,000 institutions

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The government will form in a month a separate commission to recruit teachers at the non-government educational institutions in order to curb corruption in the process.

Like the Public Service Commission (PSC), the Non-government Teachers Selection Commission (NTSC) will appoint teachers through a centrally held test to primary, secondary and higher secondary schools, madrasas and colleges enjoying MPO facilities, according to the education ministry.

Currently, managing committees and governing bodies at schools and colleges are the sole authorities to recruit teachers.

Once the new commission starts functioning, these committees will lose their authority and be entitled only to give appointments as per the merit list prepared by the NTSC.

"This commission would be independent and none will interfere in its activities. We'll form it with people who are skilled, neutral and can contribute to educate students," Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday

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said at a press conference.

"We have finalised almost everything and won't take much time. We hope to complete it in a month," he said.

The press conference was organised to brief reporters on the amendment of the Non-Government Teachers Examination, Registration and Certification Rules, 2006.

The formation of a separate recruitment commission for non-government educational institutions was mentioned in the National Education Policy, 2010.

There are around 30,000 such institutions in the country.

According to the new amendments, teachers will be appointed to institutions in their own upazilas.

However, the ministry is yet to make it clear who will be at the helm of the NTSC.

Although educationists have hailed the decision, they have stressed that the commission must be able to work effectively and independently.

### CORRUPTION AND NEPOTISM

The existing teacher recruitment system in the non-government educational institutions is mired in widespread allegations of corruption and nepotism.

To become a teacher, as per the existing system, aspirant teachers sit for a pre-qualifying examination under the Non-government Teachers' Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA).

Since the absolute authority over the selection process lies with the managing committees and governing bodies, there is huge room for corruption and nepotism, said officials of the education ministry.

Each lawmaker is the chief of four such committees in his constituency while the people nominated by him head the other committees.

"So bribery and political consideration get priority in appointments," said a top official of the ministry, wishing not to be named.

He also said although the government bears the whole salary expenses for the teachers in these institutions, it has apparently no say in their appointments.

Briefing the reporters, the minister too said appointment of teachers lacks transparency. Nepotism takes place when the right people do not get appointed.

"We need quality teachers, which is

the main challenge," Nahid said.

Explaining the loopholes in the current system, the minister said NTRCA conducts the pre-qualifying test without having a fixed number of vacant posts. Therefore, a huge number of candidates pass the test.

The candidates then resort to illegal means to get appointed since there is no provision for selection based on a merit list and since the number of successful candidates is huge, he said.

Besides, he said the NTRCA's test does not have any viva voce, so many candidates with faulty ways of expression are getting appointed.

"Overall, it hampers appointment of qualified teachers," Nahid said.

He said once the commission is formed, the NTRCA would be dissolved.

The minister informed that 12 pre-qualifying tests were held so far with more than 5.40 lakh candidates coming out successful.

Of the successful candidates, only 63,042 were recruited while the rest of 4.77 lakh are waiting for appointments. At present, there are around 40,000 vacant posts, he said.

He said the candidates who are yet to be recruited will be in the merit list of the NTSC.

### HOW THE COMMISSION WILL FUNCTION

According to the new amendments, district education officers will collect the number of vacant posts in these institutions before the end of every year.

On the basis of that demand, the NTSC will conduct the qualifying test to be held in three phases -- preliminary, written and viva voce.

A merit list will be prepared at upazila, district and national levels with an additional number of successful candidates.

The education minister said the successful candidates will be appointed to their own upazilas. If any upazila does not find any candidate for a particular subject, then someone from a nearby upazila will be recruited.

If the candidate is not found in the nearby upazila, someone will be appointed from the district level, he said, adding that if the teacher is not found at the district level, then someone will be recruited from the divisional level.

"We will take opinion from all. We welcome good suggestions," he said.

Education Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan said the validity of the certificate given by the NTSC to the candidates will be for three years. "After that, the candidates will have to sit for the test again," he said.

### DECISION HAILED

Welcoming the government decision, Rasheda K Choudhury, a former adviser to a caretaker government, said an independent commission is essential for appointing skilled and competent teachers.

"We've long been demanding for such a commission. We want an effective commission which could work without any fear or favour," said Rasheda, also the executive director of Campaign for Popular Education.

Shahjahan Alam Shaju, general secretary of Shwadhinata Shikhhak Parishad, said, "Recruitment through a separate commission will not only end unbridled control of the managing committees but also will bring an end to corrupt practices."

"We want real meritorious students to get the jobs," he said.

He, however, said they do not want to see any bureaucrat like deputy commissioners or upazila nirbahi officers pulling the strings.