

JS body finds flaws in MPO listing

Asks education ministry to complete the task, wonders why adviser should be involved

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The new monthly pay order list of non-government secondary and higher secondary educational institutions has been marred by irregularities, alleged a parliamentary committee yesterday, asking the education ministry to finalise it after a probe.

Institutions on the list get government

subsidy for teachers' salaries through monthly pay orders.

"Members of the committee at today's meeting pointed out several anomalies in the list's preparation, and wanted to know what criteria the ministry had used to include the new institutions," said Rashed Khan Menon, chief of the parliamentary standing committee on education ministry.

The education minister also admitted that some irregularities took place. Menon, also the president of Workers Party, claimed.

He said in a parliamentary democracy, ministries concerned have the final say on all ministerial matters, preparing the MPO list is the task of the education ministry, not of the prime minister's adviser.

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On May 16, the education ministry handed over all related documents to Prime Minister's Education Adviser Dr Alauddin Ahmed, following disappointments among lawmakers regarding the list's creation.

When Menon's attention was drawn to that fact, he said, "The adviser is going through the documents in line with the prime minister's directive, but it is not the task of the adviser to finalise it."

At the committee meeting in Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid came under heavy criticism of its members who alleged that some officials of the ministry were certainly involved in irregularities while the list was being prepared, two members told The Daily Star afterwards.

Menon said the education ministry claims some of the new institutions were included based on letters of demand order from a number of lawmakers, while those lawmakers claim they never sent any such letter. On the other hand some other lawmakers are claiming that there demand orders were ignored by the ministry, he added.

Menon also said Nahid assured the committee that if inclusion of any new institution is proven to be tainted by irregularities, his ministry will cancel that. The education minister however declined to talk to reporters after the meeting.

The parliamentary watchdog also heavily criticised the finance ministry for the latter's "intervention" in the process of creating the list. The finance ministry through a circular had asked the education ministry to form an inter-ministerial committee for including no more than 1,000 new institutions.

"The finance ministry does not have the right to make such suggestions," Menon said yesterday.

After a gap of six years the government on May 7 published a list of 1,022 institutions to be added to the existing MPO recipients.

But in the face of vehement opposition from some lawmakers, the prime minister in a cabinet meeting directed the education ministry to review it before making it functional. She at the same time directed her adviser, Dr Alauddin, to review the list as well.

Currently, around 26,340 institutions including 2,386 colleges, 15,515 secondary schools, 7,344 madrasas, and 1,095 technical institutions are receiving MPOs.