

# Govt goes for MPO revision again

## Controversy over new list too

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The government is again revising the list of non-government secondary educational institutions qualified for monthly payment order (MPO) facilities.

This is the second time that the MPO list has been put on hold.

On Wednesday evening, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed the education ministry to review the latest list, prepared by her adviser Dr Alauddin Ahmed, said ministry sources.

Her instructions came after many lawmakers of the ruling Awami League complained that the new roll too has institutions founded

by controversial leaders of BNP and Jamaat. The aggrieved MPs pointed out that these institutions have been included while the ones they patronise have been left out.

As the ministry began reviewing the list yesterday morning, the ruling party lawmakers and leaders set about intense lobbying for schools, colleges and madrasas of their choice.

Talking to The Daily Star in the afternoon, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said the prime minister had asked him to sort out immediately the problems regarding the list.

His ministry published the first MPO list on May 6. But the prime minister assigned her

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adviser Dr Alauddin Ahmed to revise that list after some ministers at a cabinet meeting on May 10 raised objections.

On Monday, Dr Alauddin came up with a list of 1,483 institutions. He included 600 new institutions and dropped some 140 from the previous list, which had 1,022 institutions.

In picking schools and colleges for MPO, he claimed, he kept in mind the legislators' preferences.

Many MPs however yesterday alleged Alauddin did not at all attach importance to their choices.

They said he did not include institutions recommended by senior ministers and party leaders like Matia Chowdhury, Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali, Air Vice-Marshal (retd) AK Khandkar, Abdul Jalil and Suranjit Sengupta.

He also excluded institutions established by Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Atiur Rahman, economist Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad and poet Nirmalendu Goon while having those backed by BNP and Jamaat men.

The MPs said they were particularly upset at the inclusion of Pabna's Alhaj Ahed Ali Biswas Collegiate High School, named after grandfather of Shimul Biswas, personal assistant to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Patuakhali's Golachipa Ideal Junior Secondary School, founded by district Jamaat Ameer Prof Shah Alam, and Sherpur's Shapmari Dakhil Madrasa, set up by a Jamaat-e-Islami leader.

They said they wonder how come the institutions patronised by BNP-Jamaat men have made it on the list when the adviser maintains he revised the roll on the basis of lawmakers' demands.

As the news of the revision spread, ruling party lawmakers and leaders went to the education ministry to lobby for their favoured schools and

At least 100 MPs met the education minister to hand their demand order (DO) letters, said sources adding that the ministry received at least 200 DO letters yesterday alone.

This correspondent saw many lawmakers making serious allegations to the education minister about some institutions on the new list. Some enquired how certain institutions of their constituencies got onto the list when they did not even recommend their names.

Many lawmakers were seen pressing for 10-15 institutions each.

The ministry officials said they were examining the controversial institutions on the revised list and also those which have been dropped.

"They said they would complete the task as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, repeated revisions of the MPO list have caused frustrations among teachers and employees. They said, they worry about the fate of their institutions.