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## Admission seekers postpone agitation

Intake tests for MBBS, BDS courses this year, minister tells them

Staff Correspondent

ADMISSION seekers on Sunday postponed their 20-day agitation following the health minister's assurance that intake tests would be held for enrolment in medical and dental colleges this academic year.

During a meeting with the representatives of the admission seekers at his ministry, health minister AFM Ruhul Haque said the existing system for admission in the first year MBBS and BDS courses would be followed provided the writ petition against the government's previous proposal was withdrawn.

'We will follow the existing system for this year's admission to medical and dental colleges if the writ petition filed against the proposed system is withdrawn,' Ruhul told reporters.

He said the authorities would wait for the court's order if the writ petition

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filed by a guardian was not withdrawn. He said that admission forms would be released in time.

The students' representatives welcomed the decision to restore admission tests.

'We've postponed our agitation on assurance from the health minister that the intake test will be held for MBBS and BDS courses,' said Mominul, an MBBS admission seeker.

The agitators' representatives, however, wanted the government to withdraw the GPA-based admission system and keep it suspended till 2016 as the students, now studying in Class IX, would be affected by the new system.

'We demand that the government continue with the test system, at least up to 2016,' Farzana, who aspires to be admitted to the MBBS course, told reporters after the meeting.

Ruhul said that the government wanted to introduce the merit-based enrolment system in place of the traditional admission test system, but it would fulfil the admission seekers' demand for the current academic year.

Five representatives of the agitating students and three of those who support the government's decision participated in the meeting with the health minister.

State minister for health Majibur Rahman Fakir, health secretary Humayun

Kabir, Bangladesh Medical Association's secretary general Sharfuddin Ahmed and columnist Syed Abul Maksud, along with others, were present at the meeting.

Abul Maksud said that the writ petition should now be withdrawn and the admission-seekers stop their demonstrations as the government has accepted their main demand.

The government on August 12 decided to base admission of students to the MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) and BDS (Bachelor of Dental Surgery) courses on their SSC and HSC results.

The admission-seekers have since then been rallying against the new

system. At a citizens' rally in Dhaka University on Saturday afternoon they gave the minister 24 hours' time to restore the admission test system for medical and dental courses.

Yunus Ali Akhand, a lawyer and also the guardian of an admission-seeker, challenged the decision in the High Court which asked the government to explain why it had adopted the new system.

He also filed a supplementary petition on August 23 in a bid to secure the court's order to start the former admission process, which gives 100 marks for the one-hour MCQ test and another 100 marks for the SSC and HSC results.