

87,000 applications of MPO teachers, employees pending

Shahin Akhter  27 June, 2025, 00:00

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The backlog of retirement benefits release for teachers and employees of educational institutions under the monthly pay order scheme is increasing during the interim government's tenure.

At least 87,000 applications are now pending with two authorities that provide one-time allowances after the retirement of MPO teachers and employees of the non-government secondary schools, colleges and madrassahs.

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Some sufferers alleged that it took them three to five years to get the benefits and many of them had to lobby the officials.

Many retired teachers also died before getting the benefits, some said.

The government, in the latest national budget for FY2025-26, has allocated Tk 2,000 crore for the Non-Government Teachers and Employees' Retirement Benefit Board for using its interest in every six months for paying the benefits to the teachers and employees.

The Non-Government Teachers and Employees' Welfare Trust, however, did not get any such allocation in the budget.

Teachers or employees throughout their service period deposit 10 per cent of the basic salary for retirement benefits.

Four per cent of the basic salary is deposited to the Non-Government Teachers and Employees' Welfare Trust and 6 per cent to the Non-Government Teachers and Employees' Retirement Benefit Board.

After retirement, they get the highest of 30 months' last basic salary from the trust and the highest amount of 70 months' last basic salary from the board.

Since August 5, 2024, when the Awami League regime was ousted from power amid a mass uprising, the distribution of pension facilities remained stopped for several months due to vacancies in the top positions of the authorities.

At present, over 48,000 applications are pending with the Retirement Benefit Board, while around 39,000 applications are pending with the Welfare Trust for disposal.

Till February this year, around 83,500 applications were pending with the two authorities. The number was 66,000 till August 2023.

The board and the trust receive around 1,000 applications every month, officials said.

Md Abdus Samad, who retired as an assistant professor of the Samiruddin Smrity Degree College at Baliadangi upazila in Thakurgaon district in November 2021, got the trust benefits in 2023.

'I heard that I would get the benefits from the board by December 2024 but I am yet to get the money,' he said.

He said that many retired teachers died before getting their retirement benefits.

Belal Rabbani retired as the principle of the same college in July 2021 and got his trust benefits two years and 10 months after his retirement. He also got the benefits from the board in February this year.

Belal said that the college's another assistant professor Aleya Begum retired in the same period but she is yet to get her benefits from the board.

Aleya Begum is currently living in Gaibandha and could not be reached for comments over telephone.

One of the retired teachers of the college alleged that another teacher from the college retired in early 2023 and got benefits from the board within about one and a half years by paying bribe.

Some of the retired teachers alleged that the backlog was created due to misappropriation of the teachers' funds.

Getting the benefits from the board usually takes more time than that from the trust, they said.

Mosammat Nasima Khatun, wife of Md Anisur Rahman who was allowed to go on early retirement from Gangachara

Women's Degree College in Rangpur after an accident in 2021, came to the board office in Dhaka with his nephew on Wednesday to get the benefits for his husband.

Anisur got the benefit from the trust on ground of his sickness but is yet to get the benefit from the board even after sending applications to the education ministry.

'We need the money for his better treatment and for the future of our only son,' Nasima said in tears and showed her husband's x-ray reports and other documents.

According to the Bangladesh Education Statistics 2023 by the Bangladesh

Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, 6,25,322 teachers are working under a total of 36,940 post primary level educational institutions across the country.

Among them, 3,96,368 teachers and 1,36,036 employees are working under MPO in 28,655 non-government post primary level educational institutions.

The teachers who go on retirement from government educational institutions get pension benefits like that of the government officials. The teachers of the non-government educational institutions without the MPO facilities get no pension facilities. The private ones are run by their own rules.

The retirement benefit board member secretary (acting) Md Jafar Ahmmed told New Age on Wednesday that they needed an additional Tk 6,000 crore to Tk 6,500 crore to dispose of around 48,000 pending applications.

New age fashion

‘Among the applicants, around 10,000 are currently sick,’ he said.

Jafar Ahmmed said that the distribution of the pension facilities resumed in January this year, over a month after his joining in November 2024.

It took around four years to get the facilities after submitting applications due to the backlog, he said.

Confirming about the allocation of Tk 2,000 crore in the FY2025-26 budget, he said that they also got a one-time Tk 300 crore allocation in the revised budget of FY2024-25 to distribute among the retired teachers.

Sharifa Nasrin, secretary (routine duty) of the welfare trust, told New Age on Wednesday that the trust’s activities to disburse the benefits resumed in April this year by disbursing benefits for 272 hajj-going retired teachers.

Later on June 4, a total of 776 teachers got benefits under the iBAS++ project, she said.

‘We got Tk 200 crore in the revised budget of FY2024-25 to using its interest in every six months,’ she said and added that they needed an additional Tk 3,700 crore to dispose of the pending applications.

Sharifa also said that currently it take around two and half a years to get the facilities from the trust while they are trying to reduce the backlog by making the disbursement procedure transparent.

New age fashion

Planning adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud, who is also a former education adviser, said on March 3 this year that Tk 7,000 crore to Tk 8,000 crore of teachers’ pensions had been misappropriated and there

were five to six years' backlog in the distribution of the pension facilities.

He also said that a fund had been created for them and more funds would be kept in the next national budget.