

DEMAND FOR SEPARATE PAY SCALE

Univ teachers frustrated with delay

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A SECTION of public university teachers, taking part in the movement for a separate pay scale for teachers and a review of the new government pay scale, are miffed with their Federation's decision to give one month time to the government.

The teachers, still united on their four-point demand, fear the prolonged inactivity could spell the end of the movement.

Teachers are unhappy over the government's delay in realising their demands,

as despite at least three meetings between the education minister and the federation the problem so far remains unresolved.

The last meeting was held on Tuesday.

AKM. Maksud .Kamal, general secretary of the federation said 'if our demands are not met quickly that situation can get out of control. That would not be good for anyone.'

Teachers are further frustrated about prime minister Sheikh Hasina's recent comments that public university

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teachers are provided a lot and should have been given less', describing it as 'unacceptable and a whipping remark'.

Under the banner of Bangladesh Federation of University Teachers Association, teachers have been pressing since May 14 their four-point demand — a separate pay scale and review of the new pay scale, keeping senior professors and senior secretaries on the same salary scale, identical perks for the teachers as enjoyed by the same grade of government officials and proper placement of the educators in the warrant of precedence.

Federation leaders after a meeting with education minister Nurul Islam Nahid on Tuesday gave the government time till October to meet their demands before they went for indefinite work abstention from November 1.

Federation president Farid Uddin Ahmed and general secretary Kamal said they took the decision to take admission tests and classes in October 'out of respect to the Prime Minister and Education Minister'.

The Education minister said he would place the issue at the cabinet committee formed over eliminating salary discriminations to scrutinise it.

Some teachers, however, disagreed with the decision of the federation leaders. Many teachers were of the opinion

the work abstention could have continued, leaving the exams out of its purview.

Jagannath University Teachers Association boycotted the admission tests ignoring the Federation's decision, highlighting the rift among teachers over strategy of the movement.

The Jagannath University Teachers Association general secretary Abul Hosen said they would take the admission test scheduled for Friday at the request of the academic council but would boycott the rest of the admission tests scheduled in October and November.

ASM Maksud Kamal, after declaring the new programme on Tuesday, admitted they were under pressure to enforce stricter programmes like work abstention for indefinite period.

The Federation's former general secretary Wahiduzzaman said there was lack of coordination among teachers and the federation on the movement.

On Sunday, the Prime Minister, indicating to the salary increase of 91 percent in the latest pay scale, said 'I think we have given too much. We should have given them (public university teacher) a little less'.

She added that no secretary worked elsewhere but public university teachers took classes at private universities

Bureaucrats retire at the age of 59 while public university teachers retire at 65.

Teachers described the PM's comment as 'unacceptable and whipping remarks'.

They pointed out public university lecturers and assistant and associate professors are paid less than what the government spends on commutation facilities of its officers of joint secretary rank and above.

Public university teachers in Bangladesh are paid less than what their fellows get paid in neighbouring India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Dhaka University professor Syed Manzoorul Islam said that if a teacher depended on his primary salary, he or she would need to stay in a hut and run a grocery store to give dignity to his or her family.

Teachers said only the teachers of the faculties of business studies and law, some social sciences and engineering taught at private universities as part-time teachers, within the rules of the universities.

Farid Uddin Ahmed said there was false propaganda on teachers working at private universities and as consultants. Only 34 per cent teachers take classes at private universities, he said.

He added that teachers are on the street to ensure their status, not just for increasing of salary.