

Emergency letter to UNHRC

Striking teachers call for half-day hartal Aug 23

The striking non-government teachers and employees Tuesday called a half-day hartal for August 23 in the capital as part of fresh programmes to realise their demands, as the country's education sector remained mired in a crisis, reports UNB.

They will send an emergency letter to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations on July 28 informing the newly formed global HR body about the "violation" of relevant UNESCO and ILO laws in Bangladesh.

Their latest series of action programmes also include a one-hour blockade on district highways and river routes on August 1, a sit-in demonstration in the capital on August 22 and rallies in the divisional headquarters from August 8.

The announcement came on the closing day today of a two-day rally organized by the National Teachers and Employees Front (NTEF) on the premises of the Central Shaheed Minar.

A platform of 11 organizations of teachers and employees, the pro-opposition NTEF alleged that they were compelled to continue with the agitation as there had been no effective steps yet from government side realize its 8-point demand, including cent percent salary from the exchequer.

While addressing the rally today, Awami League presidium member Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir faced teachers' strong protest as he held out an assurance that they would be paid cent percent basic salary from govern-

ment coffers if his party was voted to power at the upcoming polls.

A number of teachers got excited and expressed their angry reaction "Before the election in 1996, Awami League had promised to do the same but didn't keep the promise during its entire tenure," they were heard saying.

Since July 6, more than five lakh non-government teachers and employees have been on an indefinite strike. The strike left most of the 30,000 non-government schools, colleges, madrasas and technical institutions closed across the country, affecting academic life of millions of students.

The teachers' demands include a 10 percent increase in government share of their salary, increase in house rent, medical allowance, full festival allowance, and implementation of the relevant UNESCO and ILO recommendations.

Meanwhile, the ongoing teachers' movement got further props as the teachers of government colleges under the banner of BCS (general education) Association today observed its last day of three-day class-abstention programme to realise its 10-point demand.

The government teachers will again observe work stoppage from August 5 to 10 if their demands were not met by July 31.

On the other hand, Bangladesh Polytechnic Teachers Association (BPTA) also passed the last day of its four-day strike on Tuesday. BPTA went on strike Saturday to press home its 10-point demand.