

Non-MPO teachers sit-in enters 11th day

Staff Correspondent

NON-MPO teachers' sit-in entered in the 11th day on Thursday and that they vowed to continue the programme until their demands were met.

Their top demand is that they want their educational institutions entitlement to the monthly pay order, a financial facility given by the government.

About 200 teachers from outlying districts under the banner of Non-MPO Educational Institutions Teachers and Employees Federation are passing their days and nights on the sidewalk of National Press Club. They had also observed six days of hunger strikes till Wednesday.

The federation general secretary, Taposh Kumar Kundu, said that they have their backs against the wall now and that they do not

have any choice but to take to the street.

About one lakh teachers, who are not enrolled into the MPO, get no salary, house rent and medical allowance from the government. A teacher generally gets Tk 5,000 to Tk 7,000 from their school authority a month while some schools do not at all pay their teachers for months, the agitating teachers said. With such a low pay, they can barely make their ends meet.

'No one could live on such meagre salary and benefits amid a galloping cost of living,' said Taposh.

Low pay and benefits force these teachers to try to find out other means to earn extra money so that their expenses are met, said their leaders.

On October 26, they had begun their sit-in agitation at the Central Shaheed

Minar and after holding sit-in for four days, they embarked on their fast-unto-death strike on October 30 in front of National Press Club.

They called off their fast-unto-death agitation on Wednesday but continued their sit-in programme at the same place.

'We will continue our sit-in programme and will camp in front of the press club overnight,' said Taposh.

He said at least seven teachers were still taking treatment at different hospitals, including Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, as they fell sick during hunger strike.

Teachers and employees under monthly pay order enjoy 100 per cent basic salary from the national exchequer. An instructor is also entitled to a house rent allowance of Tk 500 and

medical allowance of Tk 300, a month.

Federation president Esharat Ali said, 'We have been observing various peaceful and non-violent programmes to press home our demands. We also sought the prime minister's intervention, but the government did not respond to our call.'

There are more than 8,000 educational institutions, including schools, colleges, madrassah and technical institutions which are waiting for the MPO privileges, statistics show.

Nearly five lakh teachers and employees engaged in about 28,000 non-government post-primary educational institutions have been realising 100 per cent basic salary from the exchequer, in the form of monthly pay order, since July 2006.