

Teachers threaten boycott of SSC exams

Mohiuddin Alamgir

NON-government teachers on demonstrations for job nationalisation for about a fortnight, on Saturday threatened boycott of the forthcoming Secondary School Certificate and equivalent examinations if their demand was not met before the examinations.

Another group of teachers said that they would

make public their decision regarding the boycott of examinations at press briefings today.

All the three groups of teachers are enlisted for the monthly pay order.

SSC examinees and their guardians fear that the holding of the examinations might be hampered as the SSC and equivalent exams scheduled to begin on February 3.

The BNP-backed Shikhhak-Karmachari Oikya Jote, on strike since January 10, and the Awami League-backed Shikhhak-Karmachari Oikya Parishad, on strike since January 12, in non-government schools, colleges, madrassahs and technical education institutions, demanding the nationalisation of job and education, said that they would boycott the exams.

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The other group, National Front of Teachers and Employees, also backed by the Awami League, on Saturday said that they would make public their decision about the boycott of the exams today.

While students making preparation for the SSC and equivalent exams are worried about the holding of the exams, other students, and also their guardians, fear that their education was being hampered at the beginning of the academic year because of the strikes.

The movement that intensified after the announcement on the nationalisation of primary schools and 'a farcical increase' in house rent and medical allowance, has left students and guardians concerned as classes are not being held in many such institutions.

The government on January 22 increased from Tk 100 to Tk 500 the house rent and from Tk 150 to Tk 300 the medical allowance for the teachers.

Leaders of teachers rejected the decision saying that it was 'nothing but a farce' in view of their de-

mand of job nationalisation.

On January 9, the government decided to nationalise 26,192 primary schools employing 104,000 teachers in the face of a movement non-government schoolteachers had carried out for two decades.

There are 456,590 teachers and employees of 26,047 non-government schools, colleges and madrassahs that are enlisted for the monthly pay order.

Most of the educational institutions in Dhaka, however, are not affected much by the strikes as the teachers' organisations do not have that much influence, some of the teachers said.

The Shikhhak-Karmachari Oikya Jote chairman, Md Selim Bhuiyan, on Saturday told New Age the teachers and employees would boycott the forthcoming SSC and equivalent examinations if their demand was not met.

Several hundred teachers and employees under the banner of Shikhhak-Karmachari Oikya Jote sat in front of the National Press Club for the fourth consecutive day on Saturday.

The sit-in caused traffic

congestion on Topkhana Road and in adjacent areas for hours.

Selim Bhuiyan said that they would submit a memorandum to the parliament speaker today.

The strike of Bangladesh Shikhhak Karmachari Oikya Parishad passed the 15th day on Saturday.

The organisation's coordinator Ranjit Kumar Saha told New Age that they would be forced to boycott the exams if their demand was not met by Sunday.

The National Front of Teachers and Employees, which gave the government till Sunday to nationalise the education system, also said that its decision to boycott of the exams would be made public on Sunday.

Sazzadur Rahman, an SSC examinee of the Manipur High School, said that he had been worried about the exams as he came to know that teachers had been on strike for an indefinite period.

His father Obaidur Rahman said that he was also worried. 'The government should take early steps regarding teacher's demand.'

Abdus Salam Talukder,

secretary to the Board of Intermediate and Secondary education, Dhaka, on Saturday told New Age that they were in touch with relevant people. 'We hope, that teachers will discharge their exams duties.'

The education minister, Nurul Islam Nahid, on January 23 termed teachers demand impractical. 'There is a political motive behind the demonstration.'

The demand for job nationalisation when teachers are happy about the increase in their house rent and medical allowance, is creating confusion, he added.

The teachers are pushing for the demand now because the government recently nationalised non-government primary schools, Nahid said.

In 2011, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, 75,10, 218 students were enrolled with 19,070 secondary schools, 3,25,791 students with 1,238 college, about 15,72,000 students with dakhil and alim madrassahs and 5,06,556 students were enrolled with 2,981 technical and vocational institutions.