

## Primary school teachers suspend pay hike demos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Headmasters of government primary schools suspended their protest yesterday following assurance that the government will fulfil their demands, including upgrading their status in the new pay scale.

Under the banner of Bangladesh Government Primary School Head Teachers' Association, they demonstrated for the last few weeks to press home their five-point demand.

They observed three-hour work stoppage on three days since October 3. They also staged a unique protest at around 40,000 out of 63,865 government primary schools, in which they wrapped their office chairs in a piece of black cloth and discharged their duties sitting on a different chair.

The protesters were supposed to go on a nonstop work stoppage from today.

A 20-member delegation of the association led by its convenor Reaz Parvez yesterday met Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman at the latter's residence and submitted a memorandum.

"In the meeting we have pointed out the rationale for our demands. He [the minister] assured us of meeting our demands and

said the prime minister was sincere about our demands," said SM Sayed Ulla, joint convenor and spokesperson of the association.

The minister also told them that the cabinet committee would consider their demands.

The delegation later met Md Alamgir, director general of the Directorate of Primary Education, at his office in Mirpur when they got similar assurances from him. The DG asked them to suspend their movement, Sayed said.

"Our central committee convened an urgent meeting and came up with the decision of suspending our movement following the assurances. We also took into consideration children's future and the upcoming final examination and Primary Terminal Examination," he said.

The five-point demand includes promoting both the trained and non-trained head teachers to the 10th grade of the eighth pay scale, giving them the status of second-class gazetted officials and reinstating selection grade and time scale, the facilities that teachers had been enjoying, in case they had not been promoted for long, until the government passed the new pay scale.