

## MPO inclusion likely from next academic year'

### Non-MPO teachers called off month-long sit-in

Staff Correspondent

NON-MPO teachers on Sunday called off their sit-in on the 28<sup>th</sup> day into their protest demanding inclusion of their educational institutions in the monthly pay order system.

They called off their protest as parliamentary standing committee on ministry of education member SM Abul Kalam Azad announced that all non MPO educational institutions would be entitled to MPO facilities by next academic year.

SM Abul Kalam Azad also the chairman of the newly formed party, Bangladesh Nationalist Front, was speaking at a solidarity rally in front of National Press Club organised by the protesting teachers.

Several hundred teachers from outlying districts under the banner of Non-MPO Educational Institutions Teachers and Employees Federation joined the rally at the same venue where teachers had been holding sit-in for the last four weeks.

They had also observed six days of hunger strike till November 4.

The federation general secretary Taposh Kumar Kundu said that BNF leader SM Abul Kalam Azad told the rally that he was making the announcement on behalf of prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

'We called off our protest programme in respect of the announcement,' Taposh said.

About one lakh teachers, who are not enrolled into the MPO system, 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.

Low pay and meager benefits force these teachers to try other means to earn extra money so that their expenses are met, teachers' leaders

said.

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 November 4 but continued their sit-in programme at the same place.

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

Teachers and employees under the monthly pay order system enjoy 100 per cent basic salary from the national exchequer.

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