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## 44 teachers fall sick on third day of protest fast

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Teachers and employees of non-government schools and colleges continue their hunger strike in Dhaka on Wednesday demanding inclusion of their educational institutions in MPO system. — New Age photo

At least 44 teachers and employees of non-governmental educational institutions fell sick on Wednesday as they continued their 'fast unto death' for the third day demanding inclusion of their schools and colleges in the government's monthly payment order system.

Teacher leaders said that 37 protesters were given saline on the day on the protest ground in front of the National Press Club in Dhaka while seven were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Of the seven, three were admitted to hospital as they fell sick while fasting braving scorching heat and heavy downpour, said teacher leaders.

'The protesters, on fast unto death for three days, have fallen sick in the scorching heat on the day,' said Shofikul Islam, senior vice-president of Non-MPO Educational Institutions' Teachers and Employees Federation.

The teachers, he said, also abstained from work for the fifth consecutive day to press home their demand.

He, however, added that the teachers would take extra classes to mitigate the losses of students once their demand was met through a government gazette notification.

On the day, a number of educationists, politicians, and lawyers, including former caretaker government adviser and Campaign for Popular Education executive director Rasheda K Chowdhury, lawmaker for Satkhira-1 constituency Mustafa Lutfullah, lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua, teacher leader Abu Bakar Siddiqui, and Samajtantrik Chhatra Front president Nasir Uddin Prince, expressed solidarity with the teachers.

Thousands of teachers took to the streets several times in recent years to press the demand for providing MPO benefits to their institutions and nationalisation of schools and colleges.

Aggrieved teachers resumed their protests on June 10 as the finance minister AMA Muhith, in his budget speech, remained silent about the inclusion of the institutions into the MPO system in line with a commitment made by prime minister Sheikh Hasina in January.

The last inclusion of 1,624 institutions into the MPO system took place in 2010.



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