

MPO teachers demand 100pc festival allowance

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The Bangladesh Teachers Association holds a press conference, highlighting their 10-point demands, including nationalisation of secondary education, at the Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital on Saturday. | New Age photo

A section of non-government teachers under the Monthly Pay Order scheme on Saturday demanded 100 per cent festival allowance before the coming Eid-ul-Fitr and nationalisation of the secondary level education.

While upholding their 10-point demand at a press conference, they also announced a programme of human chains and demonstrations in Dhaka city on March 12 and in all district towns and divisional cities on March 16.

If their demands were not met by Eid-ul-Fitr they would wage a tougher movement afterwards, they warned.

The Bangladesh Teachers' Association, a platform of a section of the non-government teachers belonging to the MPO system, held the press conference at the Dhaka Reporter's Unity, said a press release issued by the association.

The association leaders said that currently for festival allowance they received only 25 per cent of their basic pay, Tk 1,000 as house rent, Tk 500 as treatment allowance. They also said that there was no pension facility for the non-government teachers.

The teaching staff at the non-government educational institutions enjoying the MPO facilities start job as assistant teachers drawing a gross salary of Tk 12,500.

In government schools, an entry-level teacher gets Tk 16,000 as basic, Tk 1,500 as treatment allowance, 100 per cent of basic as festival allowance, and 45 per cent of the basic as house rent, the leaders said.

The association's 10-point demand includes—full festival and medical allowances and house rent for the teachers under the MPO scheme before Eid-ul-Fitr; making the pay scale equal for both the non-government teachers and the government teachers; immediate solution to the current complications centring the Electronic Fund Transfer system; increasing the retirement age limit to 65 years for the non-government teachers and employees as enjoyed by the government teachers; equal pension benefits for the non-government teachers and employees and the government teachers; introducing transfer system for the teachers and employees under the MPO; formation of a teacher's appointment commission; and nationalisation of the educational institutions currently under the MPO scheme, abolishing their current management system under governing bodies.

While reading out a written statement, the association's president Mohammad Kawser Ali Sheikh said that on March 12 they would hold a protest rally and form a human chain in front of the National Press Club at 11:00am and submit a memorandum to the chief adviser and education adviser upholding their demands.

They would also hold protest rallies and form human chains at all district towns and divisional cities at 11:00am on March 16, he continued.

If the government would not publish any circular meeting their demands before the coming Eid, the teachers and employees would go for tougher movement immediately after Eid, he said.

Other association leaders were also present at the press conference.

Earlier on March 6, another section of non-government teachers, belonging to the Alliance with Associations of Teachers and Employees under the MPO, postponed their strike after continuing for 22 days, pressing for increased benefits and nationalisation of the educational institutions under the MPO.

They postponed their sit-in programme in front of the National Press Club that started on February 12 after immediate past adviser for the education ministry Wahiduudin Mahmud on March 5 announced that the festival, medical and recreation allowances and house rent of the teachers would increase from this Eid-ul-Azha and a fund was created for paying retirement benefits to these teachers.