

# MPO teachers reject Tk 500 rise in house-rent allowance

They threaten protests

Staff Correspondent  06 October, 2025, 01:50

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The secondary-level schoolteachers under the monthly pay order scheme on Sunday rejected the recent increase in their house rent allowance and called for protest.

They threatened to start a non-stop sit-in in front of the National Press Club in the capital from October 12 demanding a pay hike.

Earlier on September 30, the Finance Division issued an office order that said the house rent for the teachers and employees of the non-government educational institutions under the MPO was increased from Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,500.

It also read that this allowance would be implemented through the issuance of an order by the education ministry and the bill paying authorities would be accountable for any irregularity in expenditures regarding this allowance.

The letter was signed by the division's deputy secretary (regulation-3) Mst Sharifunnesa who told New Age that they had issued the order on September 30.

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The order was sent to the Secondary and Higher Education Division and Technical and Madrassah Education Division under the education ministry.

After the copy of the order surfaced on the social media on Sunday, teachers under the banner of 'MPO-bhukto Shikkha Jatiyakaran Pratyashi Jote' (platform of the hopeful for the nationalisation of education under MPO) rejected the raise in the house rent allowance.

Currently, MPO teachers get 50 per cent of their basic salary as festival allowance, Tk 1,000 as house rent, and Tk 500 as medical allowance.

There are no pension facilities for them.

At the entry level, an assistant teacher under the MPO system draws Tk 12,500 as gross salary, which is around half the gross salary amount drawn by a government schoolteacher belonging to the same level.

Platform member secretary Principal Delawar Hossain Azizi told New Age that they wanted 20 per cent increase in the house rent allowance and Tk 1,500 as the medical allowance.

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'We are rejecting the Tk 500 increase for house rent,' he said, adding that they also wanted an increase in the festival allowance for employees from the current 50 per cent to 75 per cent.

He also said that from October 12 they would start a nonstop sit-in programme in front of the National Press Club until their demands were met.

In May this year, the government increased the festival allowance for teachers from 25 per cent to 50 per cent.

On March 5 this year, then education adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud announced increases in the festival, medical, recreation and house rent allowances for the teachers from Eid-ul-Azha celebrated in June.

His announcement came after teachers under the MPO system enforced a 22-day strike.

Currently, in government schools, an entry-level teacher draws Tk 23,900 gross salary in the districts except Dhaka and Tk 24,700 gross salary in Dhaka.

Of this amount, 16,000 is basic salary, Tk 1,500 medical allowance and 40–45 per cent of their basic pay is house rent.

An entry-level government schoolteacher draws 100 per cent of their basic salary as festival allowances.