

Govt pry assistant teachers suspend hunger strike after ministry meeting

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Assistant teachers of government primary schools have called off their planned hunger strike after a meeting with officials from the primary and mass education ministry, where they discussed their three-point demand.

Director general of the Directorate of Primary Education Abu Noor Md Shamsuzzaman and general secretary of the Central Committee of the Assistant Teachers' Association Nure Alam Siddiqui Robiul told BSS about the development after the meeting.

The meeting was attended by leaders of assistant teachers' organisations and senior officials of primary and mass education ministry.

Following the discussions, the assistant teachers' organisations decided to temporarily suspend their hunger strike, said the DPE director general.

'We are hopeful they will call off the indefinite hunger strike scheduled to begin tomorrow,' he added.

The general secretary of the Assistant Teachers' Association told BSS, 'Senior officials from the Ministry and the DPE were present at today's meeting where we discussed in detail our three major demands, and the authorities assured us of prompt implementation.'

He added, 'We have realised the government's sincerity in addressing our demands. Therefore, we are suspending our hunger strike scheduled to begin tomorrow. We hope the government will implement the commitments soon,' he said.

Nure Alam Siddiqui Robiul continued, 'We believe that if there is goodwill from the government, these demands can be implemented very soon. However, if the commitments are not fulfilled, we will announce further programmes.'

The DPE director general said the meeting was held in a very cordial atmosphere where the primary and mass education adviser, secretary of the ministry, and other senior officials were present along with presidents and general secretaries of nine teachers' organisations.

He said the discussions mainly focused on three key issues — upgrading the pay scale of assistant teachers from grade 13 to grade 11, simplifying the process of obtaining higher grades after 10 and 16 years of service, and expediting the disposal of promotion-related court cases involving around 32,500 assistant teachers.

'As the position of the head teachers have already been upgraded to grade 10, the assistant teachers deserve grade 11,' said the director general, adding that the proposal has already been sent to the Ministry of Finance and the Pay Commission.

'Meetings will soon be arranged with the pay commission chairman, the finance secretary, and the cabinet secretary,' he added.

He also mentioned that discussions have been held with finance ministry on granting higher grades after 10 and 16 years of service, and the move is likely to be implemented based on the Pay Commission's recommendations.

The director general said the existing rules for teacher promotion have been simplified to ensure that eligible assistant teachers can gradually be promoted to head teachers and eventually to upazila education officers.

Regarding the pending promotion-related court case involving 32,500 teachers, he said, 'The hearing has already been held, and we expect the verdict will be given very soon. Once the verdict is announced, the promotion process will be implemented without delay.'