

Teacher in struggle for pay, perks

World Teachers' Day today

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AS THE country observes the World Teachers' Day today, teachers around the country remain mired in various movements to ensure higher salaries, benefits, a separate pay scale.

Teachers from primary school to university level are frequently abstaining from work, sitting in, and taking part in processions over the last couple of months.

Assistant teachers of primary schools on Sunday began a four-day long four-hour work abstention demanding a raise in their salaries. Primary head teachers gave the government time till October 14 to raise their salaries, threatening to boycott the Primary Education Completion Exam in case of failure.

University teachers threatened to boycott the university admission tests and government college teachers warned

of work abstention on October 13 and 14.

Taking a swipe at protesting public university teachers, prime minister Sheikh Hasina said teachers do not have any right to stop the education of children in the name of movement. The PM asked teachers 'not to destroy future of the students in the name of movement', while speaking at a press conference on Sunday in the capital.

Hasina also said protesting teachers should not collect increased salaries in line with the new pay scale as long they are in a movement opposing it. She said the cabinet committee formed over eliminating salary discriminations would look into the issue and settle it.

The education minister Nurul Islam Nahid said the government is serious about the demands of the teachers.

The teachers are threatening to not take classes and admission tests, which is

'irrational'. The government will solve the problem as soon as possible, Nahid said.

The government is working on a separate pay scale for teachers, said the minister.

According to BANBIES, there are around 9.95 lakh teachers working at primary, secondary and tertiary level of education in the country.

Bangladesh Primary Assistant Teacher Federation started a four-day long four-hour work abstention from 9am on Sunday. The federation observed similar programmes for several days in August and September.

Federation president Jahidur Rahman said they would abstain for full working days from October 10 to 14 at all primary schools.

They will also observe a token hunger strike on October 15 in front of the National Press Club from 9am to 3pm.

Headmasters at primary schools have been pressing for the implementation of

a decision the government took in March 2014 to place them on a higher grade.

Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association president Abul Bashir threatened to boycott the PECE exams if their demands were not met by October 14.

The teachers held work abstention on September 19, 20 and 21.

Government college teachers under the banner of Bangladesh Civil Service General Education Association already held work abstentions at all 307 government colleges on September 10 and September 19 and 20 on the demand for restoration of time scale and selection grade.

Association secretary general IK Selim Ullah Khondaker said they would hold work abstention on October 13 and 14 and sit-in on October 18.

Public university teachers under the banner of Federation of Bangladesh Univer-

sity Teachers Association on September 17 threatened to boycott the upcoming admission tests at public universities if their demands were not met.

Teachers of public universities have been on the street since May 14 pressing their four-point demand — a separate pay scale and review of the new pay scale. They observed full-day work abstention on September 17, 13 and 8.

Federation leaders said they would chalk out the next course of action on October 6 after a meeting with the Education Minister on that day.

World Teachers' Day 2015 National Observance Committee, Shikhhak-Karmachari Oikya Jote and others teachers organisation organised discussions and a rally in the capital to observe world teachers' day under this year's theme 'Empowering teachers, building sustainable societies'.