

## Primary teachers call off hunger strike

**DU Correspondent**

GOVERNMENT primary assistant teachers called off their hunger strike as primary and mass education minister Mostafizur Rahman on Monday assured them of meeting their demand of reducing the difference in wages between trained head teachers and trained assistant teachers.

The assistant teachers of the government primary schools across the country were continuing fast-unto-death for the third consecutive day on Monday to press home their lone demand. At least 40 primary teachers fell sick during the hunger strike and four of them were sent for treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

While addressing the protesting teachers, Mostafizur said they would hold meeting with other concerned ministry to reduce the gap in wages between trained head teachers and trained assistant teachers and solve the crisis within shortest possible time.

Teachers broke their hunger strike by drinking water provided by Mostafizur Rahman at around 5:30pm, said Anisur Rahman, a leader of Primary Assistant Teachers Greater Alliance, comprising of four primary school teachers association.

'We were optimistic that a solution would be reached within a short time and so we decided to withdraw the strike temporarily,' he said.

Earlier in the afternoon, representatives of the teachers sat with Mostafizur at his residence in the city for a discussion over their one-point demand.

A small section of disgruntled assistant teachers, however, continued their protest at the Central Shahid Minar till 9:00pm, three and a half hours after Mostafizur Rahman broke their fast-unto-death programme saying that they would stop their protests only after the commitment was implemented.

Several thousand assistant teachers from across the country started the hunger strike demanding their jobs be upgraded to 11th grade with basic a salary of Tk 12,500, from the existing 14th grade with a basic salary of Tk 9,500.

They said that the pay scale discriminated against 3.5 lakh primary assistant teachers.

On December 9, the teachers threatened to go on fast-unto-death from December 23, if their status were not upgraded in the eighth national pay scale by December 22.

In 2015, government increased the salary of assistant teachers from Tk 5,200 to Tk 10,200 as per the 14th grade of the 8th national pay scale.

