

# Univ strike rolls into second day

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Teachers under the banner of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association hold a sit-in, demanding the cancellation of the new pension scheme, in front of the arts building of the university on Tuesday. | New Age photo

Academic activities in public universities across Bangladesh remained suspended for the second consecutive day on Tuesday as the teachers continued their work abstention programme, demanding the cancellation of the universal pension scheme made mandatory for new recruits.

No classes or examinations were held, and administrative work also remained suspended in most of the universities.



Some classes, however, were held at some universities.

In Jahangirnagar University, following the students' protest, the university authorities opened the library.

The newly introduced pension instrument is meant for newcomers to state-owned autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies.

The Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association called for a boycott of classes, examinations, and administrative work from the day the scheme, titled Prattay, came into effect on Monday.

Professor Md Akhtarul Islam, the federation president, said that no one from the government contacted them for any discussion until Tuesday evening.

'The matter is out of the jurisdiction of the education ministry,' he said, calling for the intervention of prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The teachers vowed to continue their protests until their demands were fulfilled.

The general staff of different universities also continued the strike for the second consecutive day, expressing solidarity with teachers.

Teachers said that the new pension instrument introduced by the National Pension Authority was discriminatory and demanded the cancellation of the scheme and an independent pay structure for university teachers.

Meritorious students will feel discouraged from taking teaching as a profession, they said, calling the new pension scheme a conspiracy to destroy the education system.

New Age correspondents from different universities reported that the strike continued for the second consecutive day on Tuesday.

Dhaka University correspondent reported that the teachers, officers, and employees observed full-day work abstention for the second day by boycotting all classes and examinations.

From a sit-in programme on the campus, FBUTA secretary general professor Md Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan pledged that the losses of the students would be made up with special classes later.

Professor Md Lutfor Rahman, convener of the DU pro-BNP teachers' association, said that this movement was for the future generation.

The university employees held different protests, including a protest rally on the campus, a sit-in programme in front of the Registrar Building, and protests in front of the closed library.

Inside the registrar's building, most of the chairs were found empty.

Teachers under the banner of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology teachers' association also observed the strike for the second day without holding any classes or examinations or taking part in any administrative

work, said the association president, professor Md Mizanur Rahman.

Jahangirnagar University correspondent reported that, like other universities, all academic activities at the university remained halted for the second consecutive day.

However, several teachers of the anthropology and English departments took classes on Tuesday, though they later termed it informal gossip with students instead of formal class.

Under the banner of the Jahangirnagar University Teachers Association, the teachers formed a sit-in programme on the campus.

Several hundred JU students besieged the university's central library after locking staff inside the library on Monday night for about half an hour, protesting the library's closure.

They resumed the demonstration on Tuesday morning.

Professor M Shamim Kaiser, the acting teacher of the library, said that the library was opened later in the day considering the students' academic loss.

New Age correspondent in Rajshahi reported that teachers at Rajshahi University and Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology continued the strike on Tuesday.

They also observed separate one-hour sit-in programmes on their respective campuses in support of their demands.

However, the administrative work of the universities was carried out to a limited extent, they said.

New Age correspondent in Chattogram reported that academic and administrative activities at Chittagong University, Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, and Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Science University remained halted on the day.

Teachers, under the banner of the CU Teachers Association, observed sit-in protests for an hour.

New Age correspondent in Barishal reported that at least eight people were injured on Tuesday in the clash on the Barishal University campus between the Barishal University Officers Association and the Barishal University Directly Recruited Officers Association over joining the scheme.

Four of the injured were later sent to the hospital.

Among the 55 public universities in the country, 35, which were represented by the teachers' federation, have been affected by the strike, said FBUTA president Professor Md Akhtarul Islam, also SUST Teachers' Association.