

# Protests Against Quotas: Students go for 'Bangla Blockade'



Protesting against the reinstatement of quota system for government jobs, a large crowd of students march from Dhaka University to Shahbagh. They occupied the intersection for an hour before withdrawing for the day yesterday afternoon. Photo: Palash Khan

Students demonstrating against quotas in government jobs are set to block key intersections in the capital and highways next to campuses across the country this afternoon.

As per their announcement, college and university students will go on an indefinite strike from today, demanding reinstatement of a 2018 order that abolished quotas.



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Protestors also threatened to enforce hartal.

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## Govt jobs: HC order restoring quota for freedom fighters' children upheld for now



There were demonstrations in the capital for the fifth straight day yesterday. Students kept the Shahbagh intersection blocked for an hour in the afternoon.

Several other streets were also blocked for a while, causing long tailbacks.

Dhaka University student Nahid Islam, a key organiser, announced that the demonstrations, "Bangla Blockade", will begin at 3:00pm at key intersections in Dhaka and highways.

"We will not return to classrooms until our demands are met," he told a rally.

In Dhaka, Shahbagh, Science Lab, Chankharpool, Nilkhet, Motijheel and other intersections near educational institutions will be blocked, he said.

College and university students elsewhere will block highways, he added.

"The government is behaving irresponsibly... The executive branch cannot avoid its responsibility. The prime minister in 2018 said there will be no quota," he said.

Nahid urged parents to take to the streets too and alleged that Chhatra League men were trying to keep students away from the demonstrations.

The protests intensified on Thursday after the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court decided to uphold until further orders the June 5 High Court verdict that reinstated the 30 percent quotas for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren.

University students demand formation of a commission to remove "irrational and discriminatory" quotas; some quotas for underprivileged communities; and regular recruitment when there is no job seeker from such communities.

They also demand an individual be allowed to use the quota privilege only once in recruitment tests.

In 2018, the government abolished quotas amid widespread student protests.

Before that, there were 30 percent quotas for children and grandchildren of freedom fighters; 10 percent for women; 10 for underdeveloped districts; five percent for indigenous communities; and one percent for people with disabilities.

Thousands marched on DU, Buet, and Eden College campuses around 3:00pm yesterday while Jagannath University students blocked Tanti Bazar intersection.

At a rally there, Rakibul Hasan, a student, said, "The government forced us to take to the streets."

There were also demonstrations on campuses of Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University and Begum Rokeya University.

Chattogram-Khagrachhari, Dhaka-Rajshahi, Dhaka-Tangail, and Dhaka-Rangpur highways were blocked for a while.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday announced his party's support for the protesters.