

Students lock IU building, protesting cluster admission

Our Correspondent . Kushtia  05 January, 2025, 01:00

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Students at Islamic University in Kushtia staged a demonstration on Saturday, locking the university's administrative building to demand the return of an independent admission process, excluding the cluster-based system.

The protest lasted around 90 minutes before the students unlocked the building after receiving assurances of further discussions on the issue.

On December 23, the education ministry directed public universities to conduct admission tests under the cluster-based system for the ongoing academic year to streamline the process and reduce confusion.

The interim government made the move after Jagannath University, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh, and Khulna University of Engineering and Technology opted out of the system this year, citing challenges such as session congestion and a lack of qualified students.

About 100 IU students in the morning gathered in front of the administrative building, chanting slogans and locking the entrance. They urged the university authorities to abandon the cluster-based system, introduced by the Awami League government, arguing that it created complexities and delays instead of easing the admission process for prospective students.

The students said that IU had a theology faculty, which was not available at other public universities.

They warned of escalating their protests if their demand is not met.

IU pro-vice-chancellor professor M Yeaqub Ali, treasurer professor M Jahangir Alam, and proctor professor Shahadat Hossain Azad met with the protesters and assured them that the matter would be reviewed.

'A decision will be made after discussions with the students on Sunday,' said professor Yeaqub Ali.

The cluster-based admission system was first introduced in the 2019–20 academic year by seven agricultural universities to simplify the process for students.

In subsequent years, universities were grouped into three clusters—general, agricultural and engineering universities—for admissions.

This year, 35 out of 55 public universities are scheduled to conduct admission tests under the cluster system, according to the University Grants Commission.