

Madrassah teachers issue ultimatum

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The ibtedayi madrassah teachers continued blocking a portion of the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue inside the Dhaka University campus for the second consecutive day on Monday demanding nationalisation of the ibtedayi madrassahs. | New Age photo

The ibtedayi madrassah teachers on Monday issued an ultimatum to the government till today's afternoon to meet their demand for nationalisation of the ibtedayi madrassahs.

They would start their movement anew otherwise, the demonstrators announced.

Pressing for their demand on Monday, they blocked a portion of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue on the Dhaka University campus for the second day running.

Under the banner of Independent Ibtedayi Madrassah Teachers' Unity Council, the teachers coming from across the country began staging a sit-in programme in front of the National Press Club on January 19.

At least five people were injured when the police on Sunday in Dhaka city dispersed a group of ibtedayi madrassah teachers at Shahbagh crossing while they were attempting a march towards the chief adviser's official residence from the press club area.

After the incident, the teachers blocked a portion of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue on the Dhaka University campus, starting on Sunday afternoon and spent night there.

They resumed the blockade on Monday morning amid police presence.

The blockade caused huge traffic congestion on the campus and Shahbagh area.

Independent Ibtedayi Madrassah Teachers' Unity Council convener Shamsul Alam on late Monday evening said that they gave an ultimatum to the government till 2:00pm on Tuesday to accept their demand for nationalisation.

'If they do not meet our demand we will hold a meeting to take decision on the next course of our movement,' he added.

In the afternoon on the day, teachers were seen sitting on the road in front of the university's fine arts faculty while some were speaking using the microphone.

Police personnel were seen in front of the demonstrators with at least one water cannon was parked nearby.

As per the council, till now of around 10,000 ibtedayi madrassahs 1,519 got allowance from the government—a head teacher gets Tk 3,500 and an assistant teacher gets Tk 3,300.

The teachers in others madrassahs do not get any such allowance, they said.

In a press release issued on Monday, Jatiya Party chairman Ghulam Mohammad Quader expressed solidarity with the demand of the ibtedayi madrassah teachers and protested at the 'police attack'.

Other demands of the ibtedayi teachers are—cancelation of the independent Ibtedayi Madrassah registration stay order 2008, code numbers for all registered madrassahs, approval for separate guidelines, teaching method, recognition, salary and allowance, appointment of office assistants and approval for opening pre-primary classes in these madrassahs.

A section of general students in Barishal formed a human chain at Bakerganj upazila, protesting at the police action on Sunday.