

# JNU protest: Hunger strike, class boycott till govt meets all demands

Govt considering discussions with stakeholders



Hundreds of Jagannath University students gather at the capital's Kakrail intersection for the second consecutive day yesterday to press home their demands, including housing allowance, increased budget allocation and improved academic facilities. They have vowed to continue the demonstration until the government issues an official response. Photo: Palash Khan

Jagannath University teachers and students last night announced fresh protest programmes as the government has yet to respond to their demands.

Around 11:45pm, Prof Rais Uddin, general secretary of the JnU Teachers' Association, said protesters will go on a mass hunger strike after Juma prayers, while their rally will continue from 10:00am onwards.



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Meanwhile, JnU Chhatra Dal Member Secretary Shamsul Arefin declared May 14 a "Black Day", protesting the police action during their demonstration on Wednesday.



JnU students and teachers, along with other stakeholders, earlier in the day announced a boycott of all academic activities.

Prof Rais said threats would not deter them and that the university would remain "shut" until the authorities fulfilled their commitments.

At a press conference, he recalled Wednesday's clashes and said he, on behalf of the teachers' association, had expressed their sorrow to the information and broadcasting adviser. "The adviser himself is a former student ... Our students have been peacefully protesting for two days now, yet the government has shown no response. This government was formed on the blood of the July revolutionaries, and now it discriminates against them. We helped these very people become advisers through our movement -- now they stand against us."



Photo: Rakib Madber

Initially, the protesters had placed a three-point demand: the introduction of a housing allowance for 70 percent of students from the 2025-26 fiscal year until residential facilities are ensured; approval of JnU's proposed FY26 budget without cuts; and the approval of the construction of a second campus at the next ECNEC meeting as a priority project.

Yesterday, they added a fourth demand, calling for the punishment of police personnel who attacked students and teachers on Wednesday.

On Wednesday afternoon, violence broke out when police intercepted the students' "[Long March to Jamuna](#)" from the university's Shaheed Minar. Around 12:40pm, [police charged batons](#) and lobbed tear gas shells near Kakrail as protesters attempted to breach barricades.

Over 50 people, including teachers, students, and journalists, were injured. At least 38 individuals were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Following the incident, protesters staged a sit-in at Kakrail, blocking nearby roads. JnU Vice Chancellor Prof Rezaul Karim and other teachers later joined the demonstration.

At 10:10pm, Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam visited the protest site, stating that the government had instructed police to refrain from using force and to engage in dialogue. However, tensions escalated when students began chanting "Bhua, Bhua" (fake, fake). Amid the commotion, a plastic water bottle struck the adviser on the head, prompting him to leave.

At least 300 teachers and students, including the vice chancellor, spent the night in front of Kakrail mosque. In a late-night notice, JnU authorities postponed all examinations scheduled for yesterday.



Photo: Star

Notably, amid the ongoing demonstrations, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday imposed a ban on public gatherings, processions, and rallies near the official residence of the chief justice and the surrounding areas until further notice. The specified location is near the JnU protest site.



Contacted yesterday, University Grants Commission Chairman Prof SMA Faiz told this newspaper that the government is seriously considering creating an emergency fund to address the university's long-standing residential crisis.

He said he had met with university officials and discussed how temporary housing could be arranged on the seven bighas (2.314 acres) of land owned by JnU. He added that the immediate priority was arranging accommodation for students.

Prof Faiz further stated that the government plans to hold discussions with the university's VC and treasurer, the education and finance advisers, and the Planning Commission to arrange the fund. "We hope to launch this initiative immediately."

Regarding the housing allowance demand, he said, "If approved, this demand won't remain limited to Jagannath University; it will spread to other institutions," adding, "This crisis [the students are facing] didn't develop overnight. Students couldn't raise their voices before because they were denied the opportunity.

"They have shown intelligence and sacrifice, but I urge them to act responsibly and not cross the limits of decency."