

7 govt college students demonstrate for Dhaka Central University Ordinance

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Police halt vehicular movement towards Secretariat from Shikkha Bhaban



Photo: Mahathir Mohammed

A group of undergraduate and postgraduate students from seven government colleges in Dhaka have been holding a sit-in in front of Shikkha Bhaban since this noon, demanding prompt promulgation of the Dhaka Central University Ordinance.

Due to the demonstration, police set up barricades and blocked the road towards the Secretariat from Shikkha Bhaban.

Md Asaduzzaman, an inspector of Shahbagh Police Station, told The Daily Star that around 200 to 300 students were demonstrating peacefully in front of Shikkha Bhaban.



Photo: Mahathir Mohammed

"Vehicular movement towards the Secretariat has been suspended, but traffic in the other direction remains normal," he said, adding that police were trying to communicate with the protesters to resolve the situation.

Meanwhile, higher secondary students of several colleges, including Dhaka College, were protesting -- demanding that the distinct identities of the colleges be preserved. They were demonstrating on their respective campuses and nearby roads this morning.

Earlier today, students of five government colleges blocked the Shahbagh intersection, saying that the "schooling model-based" draft ordinance of Dhaka Central University would create uncertainty about the future of higher secondary education. Around 11:30 am, they brought out a procession and blocked the busy intersection -- disrupting traffic until police cleared the area.

Several teachers of the government colleges have also opposed the proposed structure.

The Ministry of Education has not provided a clear timeline for issuing the new university ordinance. On November 12, the ministry said a policy decision had been taken to establish a new public university named "Dhaka Central University" by merging the seven colleges, urging students not to heed to rumours.

The seven government colleges -- Dhaka College, Eden Mohila College, Begum Badrunnesa Government Girls' College, Shaheed Suhrawardy College, Kabi Nazrul Government College, Government Bangla College, and Titumir College -- have been facing issues for years. In 2017, they went under the administration of Dhaka University -- from National University.

In January this year, amid student protests, authorities announced their separation from Dhaka University. However, this cancellation ahead of finalising the new university has further complicated the situation. Activities are currently running under an interim arrangement, with the principal of Dhaka College serving as administrator.
