

MEDICAL COLLEGE ADMISSION

Question leak protesters write to prime minister

Nasim dismisses allegations of leak, likelihood of exam rerun; calls demand illogical

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aspirants and their parents demanding rerun of the medical college admission test yesterday submitted a memorandum to the prime minister and demonstrated at the capital's Shahbagh intersection, blocking flow of traffic from all four sides.

However, Health Minister Mohammad Nasim dismissed the likelihood of any fresh test, saying the allegations of the question leak were not true.

"Illogical demands cannot be

met through such demonstration. There has to be logic," he told journalists at the ministry.

Alleging that the question paper of the September 18 test was leaked on social media, admission seekers have been demonstrating ever since.

On the exam day, an official of the University Grants Commission, Omar Siraj, was arrested and suspended on the charge of the question paper leak.

Three doctors and four coaching owners and instructors of Rangpur were also detained.

However, the UGC official died

in Rapid Action Battalion's (Rab) custody on October 1 while on remand.

Rab claimed that the official died from a cardiac arrest, but his family said he was tortured in custody, and injuries were seen on the body.

The demonstrators ended their sit-in at Shahbagh at 5:00pm and will resume the protest at 9:00am today at the Central Shaheed Minar, said Asif Bin Taki, the protesters' spokesman.

"We will keep on protesting until the prime minister assures us of rerun of the test," he said.

He also urged all the medical college students and interns to boycott classes and abstain from work for one hour today in support of the cause.

Expressing solidarity with the protesters, Pragatishil Chhatra Jote and Samrajjobad Birodh Chhatra Oikya, two alliances of 14 leftist student bodies, will enforce a student strike at all educational institutions across the country on October 7, said their convener Imran Habib.

The students will bring out torch

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processions on October 5 and 6 as part of their ongoing movement, he added.

Yesterday, the protesters started their sit-in at Shahbagh around 12:00pm after police barred them from marching towards the Prime Minister's Office.

Later, seven candidates and parents submitted the memorandum to the office.

Due to hours of blockade at the busy traffic hub, travellers of all roads connected to Shahbagh remained stuck in their vehicles for several hours.

Sharmin Akhter, a banker, who was driving her car to Karwan Bazar from Motijheel in the afternoon, said she spent an hour to reach Shahbagh from Matsya Bhaban.

Many were seen leaving their vehicles to start walking towards their destinations.

To avoid severe congestion, police later diverted the oncoming traffic towards Shahbagh.

The marchers started for the PMO from the Central Shaheed Minar around 12:33pm but faced police barricades in front of the National Museum.

They tried to break through but police forced them to give up.

However, they were adamant about leaving the intersection.

At one stage, Shibli Noman, assistant commissioner (Ramna Zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, using a loudspeaker, called upon the agitators to stay calm.