

BCLT students go berserk, vehicles damaged

Students of Bangladesh College of Leather Technology were seen holding teachers captive inside the administrative building with the main gate under lock on Saturday afternoon, reports bdnews24.com.

They had earlier blockaded the Zigatola crossing in Dhanmondi to press home demands, which they said had been "repeatedly ignored" by college authorities.

Scores of protesting students gathered at the crossing from their Hazaribagh campus, blocking it to traffic,

at around 10:45am. Police, charging with batons, managed to clear the road at around midday.

Chased by the police, students smashed a number of vehicles and a business premise.

Some four to ten people, including students and police, were injured before the students eventually returned to the college campus.

Police remained deployed outside the campus until late afternoon.

College principal Fazlul Karim told bdnews24.com by

phone that he was "not in a position to attend the college for the current deadlock", but asserted full support towards students' lawful demands.

He alleged that despite their all-out efforts to address the demands of the students, they had kept the teachers hostage, but the protesting students denied the allegation.

"We took to the street as the authorities turned a deaf ear to our long-standing demands," said third year student Assaduzzaman.

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Assaduzzaman told bdnews24.com they had repeatedly notified their demands to the principal. "But he ignored them."

They placed their demands to the college authority most recently on April 5, but the authority took no steps, he said.

"The situation will return to normalcy once our demands are met," said Marjan Amin, another third year student.

They denied holding teachers hostage inside the campus.

The students' demands include awarding the students engineering degrees under the engineering and technology faculty of Dhaka University, relocation of the exam centre to the college campus, keeping form fees within Tk 5,000 and hold exams on schedule.

Principal Fazlul K said that the college had talks with Dhaka University and reached a decision to cut form fees. He also said they were trying to meet the remaining demands.

Assistant commissioner of police Mokhlesur Rahman told reporters that some half a dozen students and police were injured earlier during the agitation at Zigatola crossing.