

## NEW ADMISSION SYSTEM FOR MBBS, BDS COURSES

# Students burst into protests, writ petition filed

Staff Correspondent

ADMISSION seekers on Monday burst into protests across the country against the government's decision to enrol students at medical and dental colleges without admission tests.

A Supreme Court lawyer on Monday filed a writ petition challenging the government decision to enrol students at medical and dental colleges without admission tests.

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The police stop a procession of medical college admission seekers protesting against the new admission system, at Shahbagh in Dhaka on Monday. — Sourav Lasker



## Students burst into protests

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colleges based on their grade point average scores in Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary School Certificate examinations instead of admission tests.

The government on Sunday decided that from this year medical and dental colleges would admit student on the basis of their results in SSC and HSC examinations instead of admission tests.

Supreme Court lawyer Md Eunus Ali Akond, in the writ petition, sought a rule asking the government to explain the legality of the decision.

He also prayed for an order staying the operation of the decision until disposal of the writ petition.

The bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar will hear the writ petition today, the lawyer said.

Several hundred admission seekers blocked roads, brought out processions, staged sit-in programmes and formed human chains in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Barisal and others districts towns in protest at the government's decision.

They also submitted a memorandum to the health minister in Dhaka.

The admission seekers demanded restoration of the admission test system for enrolment in MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, or in Latin Medicinæ Baccalaureus, Baccalaureus Chirurgiæ) and BDS (Bachelor of Dental Surgery) courses.

Protesters said the new system would not be transparent rather it would make room for corruption in the admission process.

Several hundred admission seekers under the banner of 'Medical Bhartichchu Shikkharthibrinda' (admission seekers in medical colleges) blocked traffic on the street in front of the National Press Club for about four hours from 4:30pm in protest at the decision.

Nazmul Haque, a leader of the medical college admission seekers, said the protesters would hold a sit-in at the Central Shaheed Minar at 9:00am today.

Mehdi Hasan, an admission seeker, said the government should restore the admission test system and if the authorities wanted to change the system, the announcement should have come at least a year ago.

They termed 'illogical' the decision to take students in medical and dental colleges without admission tests and on the basis of their GPA results. This system would not be transparent and make room for corruption as the students do not know how many marks they have obtained in different subjects as boards provide grade point sheet instead of marks sheet.

The students said they had taken preparations for admission to medical colleges for over one year. As a result of the decision to scrap the admission test, they would be deprived of the opportunity

to enrol at medical and dental colleges.

Students, also accompanied by a good numbers of guardians, earlier went to the secretariat at about 4:00pm to submit a memorandum to health minister AFM Ruhul Haque, who left his office before students reached there.

Protesters also brought out processions at different points of the Dhaka, including Karwanbazar and in front of National Press Club, and rallied at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Students gathered at the Shaheed Minar at about 10:30am and staged protests until about 1:30pm.

New Age Chittagong correspondent reported that the students formed a human chain in front of the local press club demanding withdrawal of the decision to cancel admission test for enrolment in medical and dental colleges.

Students of some government and non-government colleges took part in the protest.

New Age Rajshahi correspondent reported that admission seekers had formed a human chain in front of the Rajshahi Medical College in protest at the government decision. Several hundred students rallied in front of Rajshahi Medical College at around 10:00am protesting at the government decision and formed one-kilometre long human chain.

New Age Barisal correspondent reported that a group of admission seekers along with guardians had formed a human chain to

register their protest against the new system of GPA based medical and dental college admission.

The protest organised by Samajtantrik Chhatra Front in front of Barisal Aswini Kumar Hall also demanded immediate reversal of the decision.

Meanwhile, medical admission coaching centres sent messages to the admission seekers, asking them to unite and voice their protest strongly. Several admission seekers, also students of Retina, a medical admission coaching centre, told New Age that they had received such SMS from the centre.

A group of admission seekers will hold a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity to press home their demand for restoring the admission test system for MBBS and BDS courses.

Bangladesh Chhatra Union demanded cancellation of the government's decision to enrol students in medical and dental colleges based on grade point average in SSC and HSC examinations without admission tests.

The admission process of MBBS and BDS is expected to start in September. Altogether there are 8,493 seats in all medical and dental colleges in Bangladesh. The number is 2,811 in 22 government medical colleges while 4,245 in 53 private medical colleges.

The nine public dental colleges and medical colleges' dental units have 567 seats while 14 private dental institutes have 870 seats.