

JAGANNATH UNIVERSITY
**Body formed
to reclaim
halls**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry yesterday formed a committee in efforts to recover the occupied Jagannath University halls.

Local lawmaker Kazi Firoze Rashid is the convener of the seven-member committee while its other members include Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Shaikh Yusuf Harun and Additional Education Secretary Kazi Salahuddin Akbar, the ministry said in a press release.

The decision was made in a meeting chaired by

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Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid.

The committee will analyse the overall situation of the 11 occupied halls -- all in Old Dhaka -- and submit its recommendation in 30 work days.

The meeting also recommended forming a purchase committee in efforts to expand the university area through buying land in the neighbouring areas, added the release.

The Jagannath University students have been demonstrating since February 12 for recovering the halls that have been under "illegal occupation" of influential people, including police, a lawmaker and local Awami League leaders, for about three decades.

In February 1985, the old town people attacked all the halls and ousted the students of the then Jagannath College, alleging that the students were causing various problems in the area such as harassing local girls, extorting money from businessmen and doing drug business.

Meanwhile, the students continued their demonstration yesterday, blocking the Raishaheb Bazar for about two and a half hours till 2:00pm.

"We demand the withdrawal of the officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station and the deputy commissioner (Lalbagh) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police for assaulting the agitating students [on February 23]," said Sirajul Islam, secretary of Jagannath University Chhatra League.

Today, the students will demonstrate near the local office of Bangladesh Bank in Sadarghat.