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Jadavpur University protest disrupts traffic, commuters get stuck for nearly two hours

Students with headbands, banners and party flags crippled traffic in a large part of south Calcutta on Saturday evening

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Students protest at JU on Saturday afternoon

Picture by Bishwarup Dutta

ⓕ Commuters caught in a blockade for nearly two hours around Jadavpur police station on Saturday evening challenged some Left supporters who had taken over the arterial thoroughfare as if it was their right.



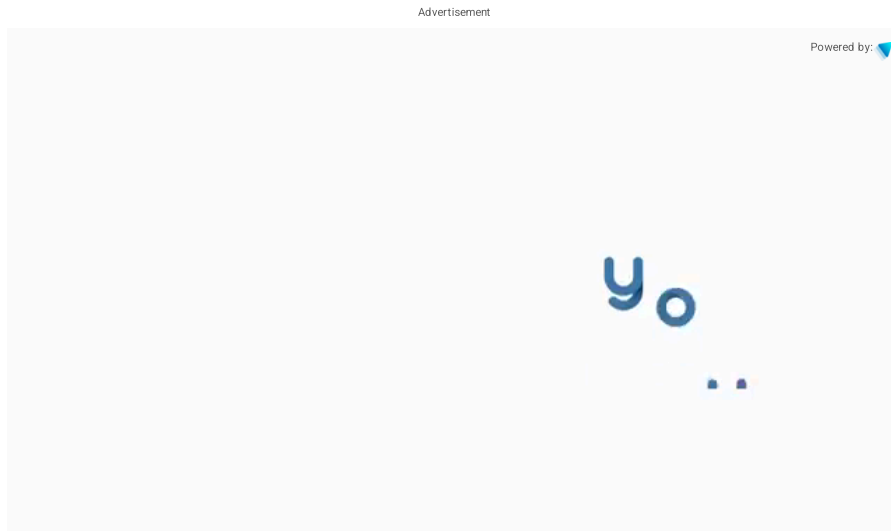
ⓐ “*Eta ki hochchhey* (What’s this?) Why are you harassing us with your agenda by stopping cars on the roads?” a woman asked stepping out of her car. Her vehicle had come to a grinding halt with rows of other vehicles near the approach to the Jadavpur police station from Jibananda Setu on the Prince Anwar Shah Road connector.

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“We have been students. We know what protests are. But it can’t be at the cost of ordinary people,” she said.

Students with headbands, banners and party flags crippled traffic in a large part of south Calcutta on Saturday evening.



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The blockade began around 6.15pm and continued past 8pm.

A little after 8pm, senior officers, so far trying to pacify the protesters, appeared to be trying to push them away. RAF personnel were deployed, too.

As the protesters were moved to one side, buses and cars gradually started moving.

Jadavpur police station is around 400m north of the Jadavpur University campus. The varsity's main hostel is next to the police station. It is in this hostel that a first-year student was allegedly killed by seniors who were ragging him in August 2023.

Commuters who travel through the stretch are regular victims of street protests held during rush hours.

Many on two-wheelers approached the protesters on Saturday and questioned what they hoped to gain by harassing people.

The blockade left cars crawling along several roads, including Southern Avenue, Sukanta Setu and the Bypass connectors.

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The police worked out multiple diversions to ease the congestion. Vehicles headed towards Jadavpur from Baghajatin and those going from EM Bypass towards Jadavpur along the Prince Anwar Shah Road connector were diverted along alternative routes.

Some Jadavpur- and Garia-bound vehicles were diverted down the Rashbehari connector from Gariahat, while those headed towards Jadavpur police station along Prince Anwar Shah Road were diverted through Tollygunge.

“Why are you preventing us from finding an alternative way?” a two-wheeler rider asked a protester struggling to head towards Gariahat from Jadavpur. “Who are you to stop us? What right do you have?” he asked even as a section of students continued to protest.

Scores of others on two-wheelers, including several gig workers, who were unable to move following the sudden blockade, lost their cool and were caught in heated exchanges with a section of the protesters.

A few others pleaded helplessness.

“My parents and I have been trying to reach home and struggling to move down Southern Avenue. I took my parents to an eye hospital. They shouldn’t be made to suffer like this,” said a man in his early 40s stuck in his car near Dhakuria.

Some of the protesting students said they wanted to lodge an FIR against state education minister Bratya Basu for allegedly injuring a student grievously. But cops at the police station allegedly delayed the process citing technicalities.

The road blockade was in protest against this, the students said.

“The officers kept finding every excuse not to record the FIR. The blockade was our means of protest,” said a student.

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