



A student, *left*, who received shotgun pellets on the back at Rajshahi University campus is being taken to hospital yesterday. Police, however, claimed that they only fired shots in the air. *Top*, Chhatra League men attack a student on campus. *Right top and bottom*, students who were injured in the "police firing" and Chhatra League attack are being taken away for treatment.

PHOTO: STAR

BCL, cops attack RU students

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of Manab Kantha and photojournalist Shams Rumi of Sonar Desh and Gulbar Ali Jewel of Natun Prokhat.

The demonstrators alleged the RU authorities hired the BCL men to thwart the movement by general students, which continued for the third consecutive day yesterday.

It was the first campus violence since the AL-led government took office for a second term in a row following the January 5 election.

The general students first began their protests on January 16, after the RU authorities in December decided to increase various fees from this month.

They also demand the authorities stop the seven evening shift master's courses introduced last month and two other similar programmes introduced in 2010. They allege that such programmes are rife with irregularities, and teachers sometimes suspend the regular classes to attend the evening shifts.

The protest gained momentum on Thursday as the students enforced a strike. This prompted the authorities

to put on hold on Saturday the decision to hike fees, but this failed to calm the students who continued their agitation, demanding cancellation of the decisions altogether.

Around 12:00 noon yesterday, leaders and activists of the BCL, a pro-AL student body, swooped on the students agitating in front of the administrative building to press home their demands.

Earlier around 7:30 am, the students put all the seven academic buildings under lock and key and brought out processions on the campus. Around 10:00 am, some 2,500 students locked the administrative building and began a sit-in there.

Meantime, the RU unit BCL brought out a procession on the campus around 11:30 am, thanking the authorities for withholding the decision to increase fees. But within half an hour, the BCL men ran into the agitating students, said witnesses and victims.

The BCL activists then tried to unlock the administrative building, triggering an altercation with the demonstrators. Within minutes, some BCL

cadres blasted five cocktails and started brandishing firearms, with a large contingent of police standing by them, the witnesses added.

As the students ran for life, police fired rubber bullets and teargas shells, leaving around 30 wounded.

Police also shot at the Shaheed Suhrawardy and Madar Bukhsh halls as some students took shelter there.

"Some attackers [BCL men] fired bullets in the air," alleged Rajib, one of the injured students.

Dispersed, a group of demonstrators tried to regroup near the Science Building and another group near the Central Library around 1:00 pm, but the BCL men attacked both the groups, leaving 20 other injured.

About half an hour later, the cops again fired rubber bullets and teargas shells on another group of students who tried to regroup behind the Central Library, leaving about 50 more injured.

Mizanur Rahman Rana, BCL RU unit president, was present during the attacks. BCL activists from Rajshahi University of Engineering and

Technology, Agrani School and College and other BCL units of the city also joined the RU BCL men, witnesses said.

Campus sources said at least five BCL men brandished firearms during the violence. They are RU BCL Joint Secretary Nasim Ahmed Setu, its organising secretaries Foysal Ahmed, Ashif Hossain and Mostakim Billah and ex-joint secretary Sudipta Salam.

They roamed the campus to terrorise the general students, the sources added.

The agitating students alleged three assistant proctors -- Shakhawat Hossain, Sirajul Islam and Helal Uddin -- ordered the police to open fire on journalists near the administrative building when they questioned the law enforcers' role.

The trio could not be contacted for comments.

Later around 2:00 pm, the angry students damaged windowpanes of Juberi Bhaban and vandalised a teacher's car there. Police fired blank shots to scatter them as they were heading for the vice-chancellor's residence.

Contacted, the RU unit BCL president claimed Shibir cadres, who got mingled with the agitating students, threw cocktails on the BCL procession, forcing his men to defend themselves.

He also denied that his men brandished firearms. But when photographs of the BCL men were shown to him, he said: "They are not our men. But if there is anyone, we will expel them."

Prof Sadekul Arefin Matin, RU students' adviser, said the peaceful movement turned violent due to the involvement of Shibir cadres. He blamed Shibir men for the attacks on Juberi Bhaban and teachers' vehicles.

Asked why police fired indiscriminately, Proloy Chichim, deputy commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, said: "There were chances of bloodshed if police did not disperse the clashing groups by opening fire."

On BCL men brandishing firearms, he said he saw none.

In the past five years, the RU BCL factions clashed more than 70 times among themselves and with Shibir men, killing four people.

Rana Plaza

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factories, collapsed burying about 4,000 people inside it.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice Md Nizamul Huq and Justice Md Jahangir Hossain passed the order considering the bail petition "as being not pressed".

It means that the defence can move another HC bench with the bail plea on a different ground.

During the hearing, Rana's lawyer Md Nazmul Huda told the court that the section of the law under which the case was filed allows the court to grant bail to the accused.

He also argued that other accused of the case had already secured bail.

Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukder opposed the argument, saying the image of the country had been seriously damaged at home and abroad due to Rana Plaza incident, the worst industrial tragedy of the country's history.

In the aftermaths of the tragedy, the USA cancelled the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) facilities for Bangladesh, dealing a major blow to the country's economy. Taking these into consideration, the court should not grant bail to Rana, he argued.

Liaquat

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appreciated by the West Pakistani-based political leadership of the country. They waited to pounce on him, but that did not hold him back. As Dhirendranath went along, he developed his argument further. Referring to the travails encountered by a Bangalee who did not know Urdu, he told the Chair:

"A poor cultivator, who has got his son, Sir, as a student in the Dacca University and who wants to send money to him, goes to a village post office and he asks for a money order form, finds that the money order form is printed in (the) Urdu language. He cannot send the money order but shall have to rush to a distant town and have this money order form translated for him and then the money order, Sir, that is necessary for his boy can be sent."

Dhirendranath's motion was rubbished by Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, who went on to offer the spurious logic that "Pakistan is a Muslim state and it must have as its lingua franca the language of the Muslim nation."

He continued, "Urdu can be the only language which can keep the people of East Bengal or eastern zone and the people of (the) western zone joined together."

Grassroots ignore party directives

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one vice-chairman post and the other four for a vice-chairman post reserved for women, according to information available at the district returning officer's office.

In Gopalganj upazila, the situation is almost the same. As many as 17 Awami League men are seeking candidacy for three posts in the upazila parishad, of them, five for the chairman post, nine for one vice-chairman post and three for the vice-chairman post reserved for women.

What the Awami League is facing in Kotalipara upazila, the BNP is facing the same in Parshuram upazila of Feni, an area considered by many as BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's backyard.

The BNP men there failed to choose one candidate for each post. Five BNP men sought candidacy for one chairman post while three for one vice-chairman post in the upazila parishad.

Chowdhury Emdadul Haq, general secretary of Gopalganj district Awami League, told The Daily Star that they would sit tomorrow and attempt to pick one candidate for each post.

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In Patiya upazila of Chittagong, three candidates of Awami League, four from BNP and one from Jamaat are seeking candidacy for chairman.

Nine aspirants have applied for chairman in Kishoreganj upazila of Nilphamari. Three of them are Awami League men, three BNP, one Jatiya Party and the rest two are independents.

In Dinajpur, a total of 60 candidates sought candidacy for chairmen and vice-chairmen posts in four

upazilas. Of them 26 are Awami League men, 23 BNP, six Jamaat, and five JP.

In Rajshahi, a total of 19 candidates are seeking candidacy for three posts in Bagha upazila. Of them eight are Awami League men, nine BNP, one Jamaat and one Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal.

Similar pictures were seen in the upazilas of Mymensingh, Netrakona, Tangail, Bagerhat, Rangamati, Jamalpur and Meherpur, reports our district correspondents.

Hasina had earlier instructed her party's grassroots to pick one candidate for each post in the upazila elections. Her party also sent letters to grassroots leaders in this regard, party insiders said.

The BNP high command had also directed its grassroots leaders to choose one candidate for each post to fight the Awami League-backed rivals.

The officially non-partisan elections to this crucial local government body are being seen as a matter of pride for the two camps. They want to prove their popularity winning the polls which follow the January 5 one-sided general election boycotted by the BNP-led alliance.

Both parties have opened up hectic negotiations to persuade party rebels to quit the race and ensure better result for the party. They expect many to withdraw today but some rebels have refused to quit.

Devotees of all ages from home and abroad converged at the Ijtema venue on the bank of the river Turag in Tongi to take part in the final prayers.

But many devotees could not participate in the munajat as the authorities held it ahead of schedule.

Many were seen coming back frustrated due to early start of the prayers.

"I left home around 7:30 am to attend the Akheri Munajat, but failed to take part in it as I reached the venue at

Devotees pray

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Ijtema after the concluding prayers.

According to the schedule, the first phase of Biswa Ijtema will take place from January 9 to January 11 in 2015 and the second phase from January 16 to January 18.

For the first time in the Ijtema history, the schedule of the congregation was declared a year before the event.

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"I left home around 7:30 am to attend the Akheri Munajat, but failed to take part in it as I reached the venue at

about 10:25 am," said Mohammad Yusuf, a resident of Tejgaon in the capital.

Yusuf said he walked around 3kms and changed transport several times to reach the venue.

The gathering started to swell since early morning.

Many people joined the munajat from the roofs of vehicles and boats and rooftops of residences surrounding the Ijtema ground.

The third and final day of Ijtema began with the sermons of Indian Islamic scholar Maulana Saad around 7:00 am.

Traffic on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, Dhaka-Tongi-Narsingdi-Sylhet highway and Tongi-Ashulia road remained suspended in the morning so that the devotees could walk the Ijtema ground without much hassle.

7 docs lose jobs

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They are Md Rajib Mahmud, Ashfaq Nabi, Md Mahmudul Kabir Bashar, Pobina Afzoe Parveen, Nahida Begum, Md Sharif Ahmed and Nurunnahar.

Last week, three other doctors of Mymensingh were suspended for absenteeism.

Addressing a roundtable discussion organised and hosted by Bangla daily Prothom Alo at its office in the capital yesterday, the health minister said the government would introduce incentives for doctors posted in

rural areas so that they did not absent themselves from work.

He also urged leaders of Bangladesh Medical Association and health ministry officials to "pressurize" physicians into serving in rural places.

"We cannot provide healthcare services in rural areas if doctors do not go there rendering the healthcare infrastructures utterly useless," Nasim said.

"Government officials of all departments stay at their rural workplaces. Why then will a physician be persistently absent from work?"

3 BNP leaders get HC bail

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A five-member bench of the Appellate Division led by Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain passed the order after dismissing four leave-to-appeal petitions filed by the government against the HC orders.

The HC on January 21 granted bail to the BNP leaders for six months in the cases.

Police filed the two cases with Motijheel Police Station on September 24 and November 6 last year on charges of blasting crude bombs, vandalising vehicles and preventing cops from discharging their duties.

During a hartal on November 5, BNP men blocked a road near Kamalapur Bazaar and hurled crude bombs at law enforcers, according to the statement of a case filed on November 6 last year.

According to another case statement, BNP men from a procession vandalised a car and blasted several cocktails before Motijheel Ideal School and College on September 24 last year.

The names of four BNP leaders were not mentioned in the first information reports of the cases. Police later shown them arrested in the cases.

Moudud, Anwar and Rafiqul were detained in front of Hotel Sonargaon in the capital on November 8 while Biswas near

SM Qaisar indicted

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supporting, instigating and abetting the actual commission before or during the incidents as alleged by the prosecution," it added.

The 73-year-old, however, pleaded not guilty before the tribunal saying: "I am totally innocent. I was not involved in any of the charges."

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan with members Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Shahinur Islam fixed March 4 for the opening statement and examination of prosecution witnesses. It also asked the defence to submit a list of their witnesses along with documents by March 4.

Qaisar was arrested in the capital on May 21 last year following a charge of grabbing an abandoned public property at Gulshan in the capital.

Qaisar was arrested in the capital on November 15, 1971, a group of Razakars, Peace Committee and Qaisar Bahini members and Pakistani army under the leadership of Qaisar attacked 22 villages.

According to the genocide charge,

iniate shooting, setting houses on fire, looting households with intent to destroy the Hindus and killed 108 of them, the charge said.

According to a rape charge, one day in mid-August, Qaisar, accompanied by his followers and Razakars, captured and brought a woman along with her father and uncle to an army camp set up at Jagadishpur High School in Habiganj.

"Then you, Syed Mohammad Qaisar, handed her over to the army for their entertainment despite protest by her father," said the charge.

The army men raped her for 8-10 days and abandoned her, but she got pregnant at the camp, it added.

Fourteen other charges are: 1. Killing of Shahjahan chairman, injuring Nayeb Ali, attack, arson and loot in Kazibari under Madhabpur in Habiganj on April 27; 2. Loot and arson in Madhabpur Bazar and Katiara under Madhabpur in Habiganj on April 27; 3. Killing of four people and arson in Kabirnagar under Madhabpur in Habiganj on April 27; 4. Killing of 15 people

including Abdus Sattar at Madhab