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# Students bleed as BCL pounces on them

STAR REPORT

Not just the students of Dhaka University, students of at least four more universities across the country bled yesterday as they came under attack by Chhatra League men during their anti quota protests.

Students of Jagannath University, Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, and Eden Mohila College, among others, were protesting against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent comments on freedom fighter quota, alongside demanding reform in quota system, when BCL activists and leaders carried out the attacks on them.

At JU, students, under the banner of Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, started a march in front of the university central library around 6:30pm.

However, at least 50 students were injured after being attacked by BCL members around 7:00pm.

The attack lasted for over two hours.

According to victims and eyewitnesses, BCL leaders and activists carried out the attack, which started from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall.

"Around 50 students took treatment at the university medical centre. Of them,



A blood-stained shirt of an anti-quota protester lies on the ground, surrounded by BCL men, who carried out attacks on students in several universities across the country yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

20 were referred to a private hospital in Savar as their condition deteriorated," said Rezwanur Rahman, a doctor at the centre.

In Chattogram, BCL members attacked quota reform movement activists in

Sholashahar Railway Station area, resulting in at least three students being injured.

Earlier, BCL activists seized the key to the CU shuttle train and halted it at 2:30pm. CU students were supposed to

travel to the city to attend a quota reform programme at Sholashahar Railway Station by train.

BCL members then detained Talat Mahmud, assistant convener of the quota reform movement in Chattogram, beat him, and forcibly took him to the proctor's office.

Eyewitnesses said when the protesters started for the proctor's office in a procession, they were attacked by BCL activists in front of the Shaheed Minar.

Contacted, Enamul Haque, assistant proctor of CU, said, "BCL activists took Talat to the proctor's office. Upon receiving information, Talat's fellow activists also came to the office. We drove out both groups after counselling."

"Talat is now safely in our custody," he added.

Later, when the quota reform movement activists started a rally at Sholashahar Railway Station, a clash ensued between BCL activists and quota reform movement activists around 3:30pm, said eyewitnesses.

At least 20 JnU students were injured after they participated in the demo held in Dhaka University area. The injured students are currently receiving

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## 'RAZAKAR' BACK AND FORTH Who said what?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students' sentiments were inflamed by what they termed was a "disparaging comment" by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her press conference on her recent China visit on Sunday afternoon. Her usage of the term razakar (collaborators of Pakistani occupying forces in 1971) has become a point of contention, with students taking issue with it and many ministers having their say.

### HASINA'S COMMENT

"Are the children and grandchildren of freedom fighters not talented? Are only the children and grandchildren of the razakars [collaborators] talented?"

"Why do they have so much resentment towards freedom fighters?" If the grandchildren of the freedom fighters don't get quota benefits, should the grandchildren of Razakars get the benefit?"

### STUDENTS' PROTEST SLOGANS

Following the PM's comments, university students countrywide came out of their dorms on Sunday night with slogans like:

"Tui ke? Ami ke? Razakar, razakar!"

[Who are you? Who am I? Razakar, razakar!]

and "Chaite gelam odhikar, hoye gelam Razakar [Asked for rights and became a razakar]".

### OBAIDUL QUADER

ROAD TRANSPORT AND BRIDGES MINISTER

Chhatra League will give a fitting reply to those student leaders of the quota reform movement who on Sunday night labelled themselves razakars and showed arrogance.

### DIPU MONI

MINISTER FOR SOCIAL WELFARE

"Those who introduce themselves as Razakars have no right to hold the blood-stained red and green flag of our Liberation War martyrs or to march with that flag tied to their foreheads."

### ZUNAI AHMED PALAK

STATE MINISTER FOR ICT

"Isn't it shameful to chant slogans in support of razakars at Dhaka University, where razakars committed mass murder of students and teachers on March 25 [1971]?"

### MOHAMMAD ALI ARAFAT

STATE MINISTER FOR INFORMATION

"We are against discrimination, we stand for merit. There is no need to be a Razakar for this... No demands will be accepted for those who want to become razakars."

### MOHIBUL HASSAN CHOWDHURY

EDUCATION MINISTER

"...These people do not respect the court or the government. Therefore, it is not possible for this state to respect these traitors! They have raised the right slogan! Let the true faces of the razakars of this era be revealed!"

### SADDAM HOSSAIN

BCL PRESIDENT

"Those who support razakars...They will not be eligible for government or private jobs."

## Fakhrul condemns BCL attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

B N P Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday strongly condemned and protested the brutal attack on the agitating students by Chhatra League activists on the Dhaka University campus.

In a statement, Fakhrul said the Awami League government has taken the approach of suppressing the ongoing movement of general students in the same way they run "steamroller" on the movement of pro-democracy political parties.

"Today, police and Chhatra League jointly attacked and injured so many students in different educational institutions of the country, including Dhaka University," he said.

"We condemn the cowardly and heinous attack... The attackers must be punished," he said.

# Health(care) comes at a high price

## 61pc face financial difficulties for medical costs, says BIDS study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 61 percent of people in the country face financial difficulties while seeking medical services in hospitals, according to a new study by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

On average, a family has to spend around Tk 55,134 when a family member is admitted to the hospital and about 54 percent of this cost is spent on medicines, the BIDS study found.

The study findings were shared at a seminar at the BIDS Auditorium in the capital yesterday.

The study, titled "Catastrophic Health Shock and Impoverishment in Bangladesh: Insights from HIES 2022," showed that due to out-of-pocket payments, around 3.7 percent of the population, which is equivalent to 6.13 million people, were pushed below the national poverty line in 2022.

The data for the study were obtained from the Household

- 26.83pc borrowed money
- 18.77pc took help from friends, relatives
- 15.53pc sold their assets
- 32.58pc broke their savings
- 6.29pc paid from regular earnings



Income and Expenditure Survey 2022. Household characteristics, out-of-pocket payments for healthcare, and detailed household consumption expenditures of 14,000 households were analysed for the survey.

Medicine costs are the major costs both for hospitalised patients and outpatients, it said.

Of the people who suffered financial difficulties while seeking treatment, 26.83 percent borrowed money, 18.77 percent took help

from friends and relatives, and 15.53 percent sold their assets.

Besides, 32.58 percent of people broke their savings to get hospital services and 6.29 percent paid hospital expenses from their regular earnings, the research findings showed.

Most healthcare costs in Bangladesh come directly from people's pockets, as out-of-pocket payments accounted for 55 percent of the country's healthcare

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## 24 eminent citizens condemn 'razakar' slogans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-four eminent citizens have condemned and expressed their anger over the slogans of the students who are protesting for quota reform.

"We are very surprised and angry to hear the slogans 'Who are you, who am I, Razakars' and 'We are all Razakars' from the procession of the students demanding the cancellation of the quota system in several universities on Sunday night," they said in a statement yesterday.

They were hurt and angry as slogans demanding representation of the razakars, who opposed independence, planned the killing of intellectuals, were uttered at the Dhaka University premises, the statement said.

No one has the right to

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