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Mindless mayhem

Around 100 injured as students of 3 colleges clash, ransack campus of one

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The clashes between students of three colleges continued yesterday, leaving over 100 injured in the capital's Jatrahari.

Hundreds of students from Shaheed Suhrawardy College and Kabi Nazrul College, armed with sticks, iron rods, and sharp weapons, stormed Dr Mahbubur Rahman Mollah College (DMRC) around noon, witnesses said.

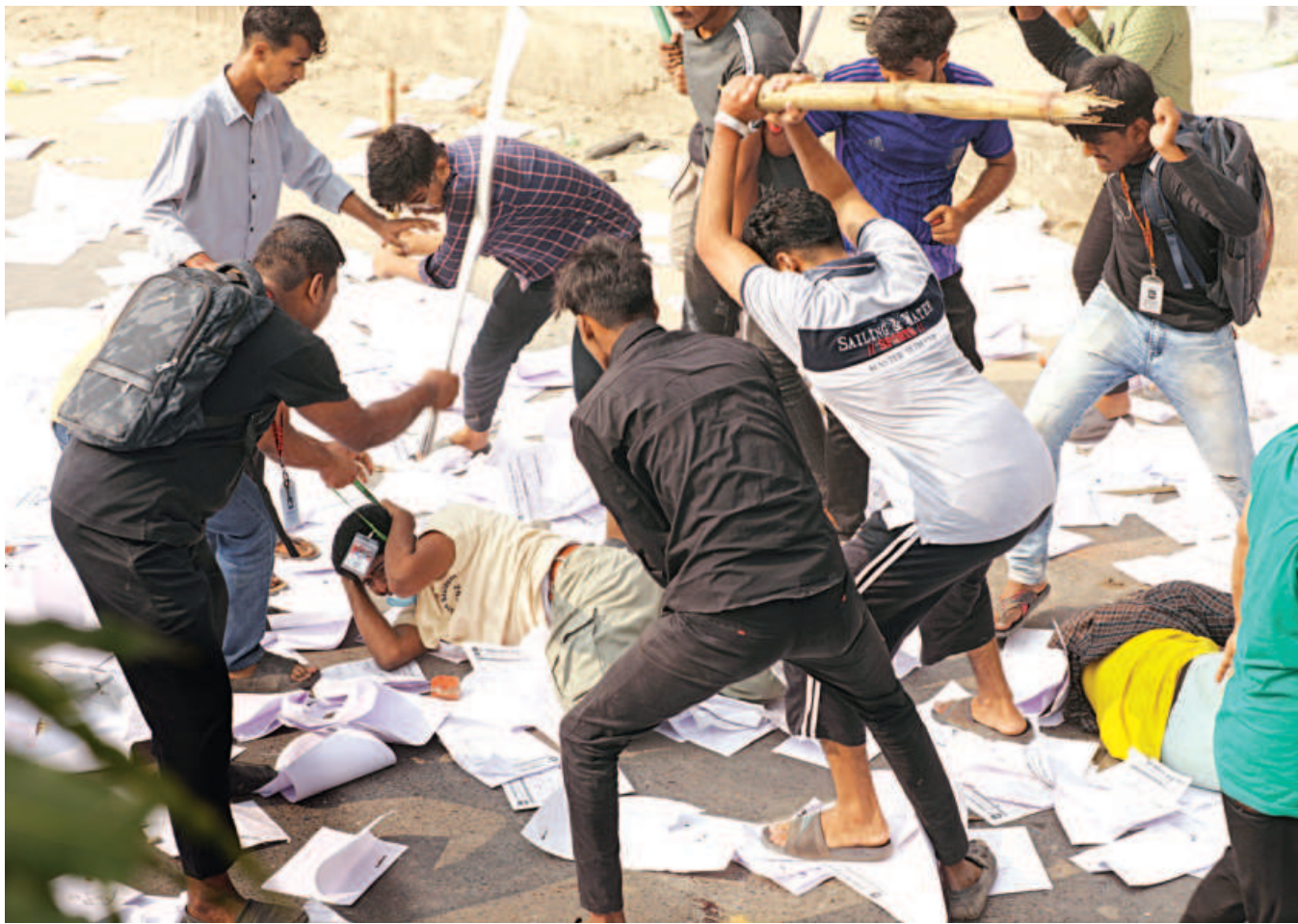
Nearly 300 DMRC students who were at the entrance of the college in anticipation of the attack were chased away by those from the two other colleges -- both government institutions in Old Dhaka. They assaulted 15-20 DMRC students.

Nearly 1,000 marauding students then entered the 11-story DMRC building and damaged everything on their path, set fire to furniture, damaged documents and looted cash, computers, and laptops, said six witnesses.

They ransacked the library, tore hundreds of books,

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Marauding students set fire to furniture, looted cash, computers, and laptops, and trashed the library.



A student being beaten up while another (in yellow shirt) lies motionless. Around 100 people were injured when students of Government Suhrawardy College and Kabi Nazrul Government College launched an attack on the Mahbubur Rahman Mollah College in the capital's Jatrahari yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Plot afoot to create unrest

Govt suspects, warns against vandalism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government believes that the chaos and vandalism in different parts of the capital that happened in the last two days may be part of a bigger plan.

Two advisers of the interim government spoke at a briefing of the chief adviser's press wing at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

"It is not a coincidence that so many incidents happened in just one day," said Nahid Islam, information adviser.

"Many do not want to see the government function successfully," he said.

Attacks, vandalism and battery will not be tolerated, he said.

Local Government Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain said law enforcers did not show heavy-handedness in preventing clashes between students in Old Dhaka and Jatrahari to avoid a direct confrontation with the pupils.

"We admit that police may have shown weaknesses in acting against the students," he said.

"You know that the police are in the middle of the process of reforms. As so many students were engaged in clashes,

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Govt will carry out sweeping labour reforms

Yunus tells US delegation

STAR REPORT

The government is committed to carrying out sweeping labour reforms in an effort to attract more foreign buyers to the country, Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus said yesterday.

He made the comments at his office in Dhaka's Tejgaon when a US labour and brand delegation called on him to discuss labour issues, the Chief Adviser's Office said in a statement.

"We want to make our labour laws at par with global standards. It is my commitment," Prof Yunus told the delegation.

He said the interim government appointed a special envoy only to reform the country's labour laws and to address the concerns raised by local and international labour rights groups, the International Labour Organization and

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Students to launch a party by next Feb

Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and Jatiya Nagorik Committee will jointly lead the process, say leaders of the two platforms

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Student leaders who spearheaded the July-August mass uprising are planning to launch a political party by early February 2025 and contest the next general election.

The new party will be centred on a balanced approach, avoiding leftist or rightist views. It will adhere to international standards and consider the reality of Bangladesh while addressing any issues.

Leaders of the civic and student platforms the Jatiya Nagorik Committee and the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement will lead the new party.

However, the two platforms will not be dissolved. They will continue to work as "pressure groups".

Three top leaders of the two platforms shared their plan to launch the political party with The Daily Star. They did not want to disclose their identity since the matter was still at the planning stage.

They said the new party will have leaders from various other political parties and representatives from the civil society.

The leaders of the two platforms will not be directly involved, but some of them will participate in elections.

"Those who are interested in joining the political party from the two platforms will be incorporated into the party," one of the leaders said.

The two platforms are now forming district- and institution-level committees.

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To contest the next general election, student leaders have already started to reach out to potential candidates in each constituency.

Press freedom faces serious attack: Noab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) yesterday expressed concern over continued attacks on the freedom of the media.

Strongly condemning the recent sit-ins, attacks, and vandalism in front of the Prothom Alo and The Daily Star offices, Noab said such attempts to "create chaos" were disrupting the practice and environment of journalism.

"If anyone has objections to any news or the editorial policy of a particular newspaper, they can clarify their intellectual stance and views through writing," Noab said in a media statement, signed by its President AK Azad.

According to the statement, some individuals over the last few days attempted to create

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Won't tolerate attack on media

Says information adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will not stand for any newspaper office or the shut down of any media outlet through the use of force, Information Adviser Nahid Islam has said.

"Those involved in vandalising newspaper offices and intimidating the media will be brought to book," he said at a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

"There was tension regarding the Prothom Alo over the last few days. Tension was created in front of its Dhaka office yesterday [Sunday]. The newspaper's Rajshahi office came under attack today [yesterday]. Besides, demonstrations took place in different parts of the country, including in Chattogram and Brahmanbaria [in this connection]."

A group of people also demonstrated in front of The Daily Star office on Friday.

"Our position is that if a section of people has any complaint about a media outlet, they can express their resentment peacefully. We don't support vandalising any newspaper office or putting pressure on one to shut it.

"We will not tolerate any such incident in the future."

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BNP on same page with govt on reforms

Tarique says bid on to create division among people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said the party has no differences of opinion with the interim government over the ongoing reform initiatives.

"Reforms first or elections first? Those who raise such questions to create confusion among the people have ulterior motives," he said while virtually addressing the annual general meeting of the Dhaka Union of Journalists at the Jatiya Press Club.

"The BNP believes that reforms are not something that can be completed. One initiates reforms, but another carries them forward. Reforms are an ongoing process," he said.

Tarique said ousted autocrat Sheikh Hasina and her accomplices were trying to make a comeback by using various tactics.

"These evil forces, both inside and outside the country, are engaged in efforts to create misunderstandings among the pro-Bangladeshi forces," he said.

"But I strongly believe that if we remain vigilant, there will be no room for misunderstandings," he added.

Speaking from London, the BNP leader also said his

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Over a year ago, a part of this residential building was knocked down during an eviction drive to reclaim an old channel of the Buriganga in the capital's Kamrangirchar. With no repairs made since then, people are still residing in the building, exposing themselves to potential danger. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BUSINESS

Govt to speed up dev spending

The interim government is going to ask ministries to accelerate the implementation of ongoing development projects, Planning Adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said, as he believes this would help avert a further economic slowdown.

Citing how the economy is facing turbulence such as political turmoil, labour unrest, expensive loans and stubbornly high inflation, the adviser yesterday said that it was time for policy adjustments.

This came a day after the government reported at least 14-year low development spending in the July-October period of this fiscal year.

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