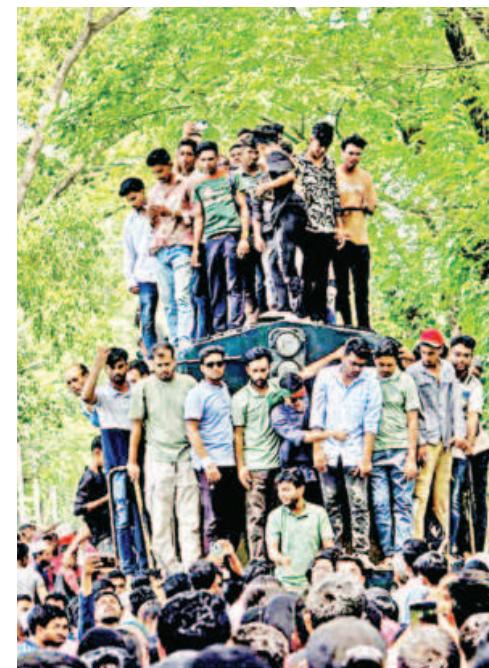




CLASHES AT THREE UNIVS ... Left: An injured student of Chittagong University leaps into a pond to escape attackers. Right top: Students of Mymensingh's BAU ride atop the Dhaka-bound Haor Express train during their "Agri-block" programme yesterday morning. Hours later, alleged outsiders attacked the protesters who had confined university faculty members. Right bottom: RU Chhatra Dal activists and other student bodies clash after JCD leaders vandalised the Rucusu election office, demanding freshers be added to the voter list. Story on Page 1.



PHOTOS: RAJIB RAIHAN (CTG), AMINUL ISLAM (MSINGH), AZAHAR UDDIN (RAJSHAHI)

CU students, locals clash over assault on female peer

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whom were later referred to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Some of the injuries were from machetes and daggers; others were beaten with rods and sticks, while some were hit by brick chunks.

Parkview Hospital General Manager Md Zia said seven students were admitted there, including one with a critical head injury. "Imtiaz Ahmed Sayem from the IR department is undergoing surgery."

Two reporters of The Daily Star were also injured while covering the clashes.

HOW IT BEGAN

Witnesses said a Philosophy department student returned to her private mess at 11:00pm Saturday and found the gate locked. After repeated knocking, the guard refused to open. She was let in after her roommates gathered. Once inside, the guard allegedly shoved and assaulted her, remarking, "Why are you coming in so late?"

As the student informed seniors, the guard fled. But the news spread quickly, drawing hundreds of students and locals to

gather.

The situation escalated into chases and counter-chases, leaving dozens injured.

Army personnel brought the situation under control around 3:30am early yesterday.

SECOND BOUT

Tension escalated yesterday morning around Jobra village near Gate No-2 when several hundred students gathered on one side while locals stood on the other, chanting slogans against each other.

Around noon, Pro VC (academic) Prof Md Shamim Uddin Khan, Pro VC Kamal Uddin, Proctor Tanvir Mohammad Haider Arif and other teachers arrived to pacify the situation. Soon afterwards, fresh clashes broke out with brick chunks hurled by both sides. At least 10 students and Pro VC Kamal were injured.

No law enforcement officers were present at the scene then.

Witnesses said villagers armed with rods and machetes chased students through paddy fields and alleys.

"This was a planned attack, and the law enforcers

did nothing to stop it," said Saikat Khan, a Bangla student.

Sakhawat Hossain of journalism department said, "They pushed students off rooftops."

Students alleged that despite hours of violence, law enforcement arrived only after 3:00pm. After Section 144 was imposed, around 3:30pm, large contingents of police, Rab, and army entered the campus.

An emergency meeting on the situation, chaired by CU VC was held around 7:20pm on yesterday. After the meeting, CU Registrar Professor Saiful Islam told this newspaper that a 21-member committee has been formed to improve long-term relations between CU and residents of the Jobra-Fatepur area.

Chittogram Deputy Commissioner Farida Khanam said, "More than 300 students were injured in the attack, while no one from Jobra village was hurt, indicating a one-sided assault. I have instructed the local chairman to ensure safe accommodation for all university students tonight."

CU Pro VC

did nothing to stop it," Prof Shamim Uddin said. "The university administration will cover all medical expenses for the injured. We have spoken to the local community, who have assured full cooperation with the university."

A similar clash with locals occurred on October 21 last year, reportedly involving Jubo League and Chhatra League activists. That unrest was settled through mediation.

BAU CLOSED

Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh was declared closed indefinitely last night after alleged outsiders attacked protesting students who had confined over 200 teachers, including the vice-chancellor, during an academic council meeting convened to discuss the students' demand for a single combined degree.

At least seven students were injured in the attack. Students have been asked to vacate their halls by 9:00am today, said Proctor Prof Md Abdul Alim. "We will investigate the attack on the students and incidents of vandalism on campus."

Unrest began when students of veterinary science and animal husbandry faculties rejected the outcome of an academic council meeting that decided to continue with three degrees: BSc in Animal Husbandry, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, and a separate combined degree.

From 1:00pm, they locked the Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin Auditorium, confining over 200 teachers.

Around 7:40pm, when district officials and police intervened, unidentified outsiders allegedly attacked the students, leaving at least seven, including females, injured. Five were admitted to hospital, said Shibli Sadik, a student of the animal husbandry faculty.

Protesting the attack, students brought out a procession and later announced a four point demand, including a single combined degree and resignation of the proctorial body.

The proctor said a four-member committee has been formed to prepare a new curriculum for the combined course, along

with a makeup curriculum.

TENSION FLARES AT RU

Scuffles broke out among student organisations at Rajshahi University yesterday over the exclusion of first-year students from the voter list for the upcoming Rucusu election.

Tensions flared at 9:30am when Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists staged a sit-in outside the treasurer's office. At 10:10am, they entered the Rucusu office and resorted to vandalism.

By 11:00am, Chhatra Shibir, Students Against Discrimination (SAD), and other groups staged counter-protests, triggering repeated clashes. At least six students were injured.

University sources said including first-year students may delay the polls.

Rucusu Chief Election Commissioner Prof F Nazrul Islam said first year students could not be included as voters since they were not enrolled when the schedule was announced.

[Our CU correspondent, Chattogram staff correspondent, Mymensingh correspondent, and RU correspondent contributed to this report.]

Awami League leader stabbed to death in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A ward-level Awami League leader was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants in Manirampur upazila of Jashore on Saturday night.

The victim, Ashraful Islam, 42, was the general secretary of AL's Mobarakpur ward unit of Chaluhati union, said Bablur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Manirampur Police Station.

The incident occurred around 11:15pm in front of a tea stall near the Sawmill area in Rajgang Bazar, he added.

Quoting witnesses, the OC said Ashraful was in Rajgang Bazar when a group of assailants attacked and stabbed him indiscriminately before fleeing the scene. Locals rushed to his aid and tried to take him to hospital, but he died on the way.

Police later went to the spot and brought the situation under control. However, the motive behind the murder and the identity of those involved remain unknown.

OC Bablur added that an investigation is underway, and police are working to arrest the attackers.

Earlier in May, the interim government decided to ban all activities of the Awami League, including online, under the Anti-Terrorism Act until the International Crimes Tribunal completes the trial of the party and its leaders.

Yunus promises

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Syed Abdullah Muhammed Taher expressed doubts over the interim government's capacity to make the election free and fair when it "cannot even control extortion".

He warned that reforms agreed upon by 31 parties must be implemented before polls, otherwise "the blood given, the lives given... will become meaningless."

The Jamaat leader said they had agreed with the chief adviser that the polls be held in February before Ramadan and had "no confusion or division" over the timeframe. But, he alleged, once Jamaat raised conditions for a fair election, "immediately one party said we do not want polls within this timeframe. Such remarks are a conspiracy."

He added that Yunus had assured them of introducing reforms, ensuring visible justice, and holding a free and fair election of international standard. "But given today's situation, these achievements are at risk of becoming questionable," he said.

The Jamaat leader also alleged "foreign and domestic forces" were pushing a blueprint election, pointing to the "unprecedented" announcement of the election timeframe in London after talks with one party.

"The July Declaration of August 5 was incomplete... Some issues were prioritised, others avoided. The government should have decided clearly on the July Charter before announcing the election roadmap and timeframe," he said.

When asked about the Jatiya Party, Taher said, "Awami League's associate Jatiya Party worked with them. So, the same decision

you (CA) took about Awami League, you can take about Jatiya Party."

Jamaat's delegation included Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar, and assistant secretaries general Rafiqul Islam Khan and Hamidur Rahman Azad.

After its meeting, NCP Senior Joint Convener Ariful Islam Adib said the February election should instead be a constituent assembly election to give the July Charter legal and constitutional basis. He warned that otherwise Bangladesh would remain trapped in "a 55 year-long crisis of personalised, authoritarian rule."

Adib voiced concerns about the Election Commission's neutrality, citing a scuffle inside its office over constituency delimitation, and criticised the rule barring those turning 18 after October 31 from voting. "This means youths who turn 18 by February will be excluded despite actively joining the mass uprising."

He said NCP had placed five demands before the CA: welfare for July martyrs' families, action on the enforced disappearance commission's recommendations, stronger action against Awami League and Jatiya Party, coordinated handling of pending cases against AL leaders, and suspension of JP's activities for "legitimising illegal elections".

Adib also alleged that parts of the bureaucracy, business, and media establishment were resisting reform. "The enforced disappearance commission has named DGFI, NSI, SB, CTTC, Rab, and police as directly involved in disappearances. But we have yet to see effective government action," he said.

We will balance politics and education at DU

FROM PAGE 1
the central publication secretary of Shibir, told The Daily Star in an interview.

He said the Shibir-nominated panel "Oikyaboddo Shikkhkharti Jote" is designed to be inclusive. "We have Chakma students, physically challenged students, hijabi and non-hijabi female students, national-level athletes, cultural activists, writers, and researchers," he said, adding that candidates were nominated based on their skills and portfolios.

Inspired by the spontaneous response of students, especially female students, Kayem said, "Just as the July uprising

stood for unity, our panel seeks to send an inclusive message for building a new Bangladesh."

He insisted his identity as a student activist was greater than his political affiliation. "During the July movement, I worked alongside many other organisations -- right, left, and centrist. My primary identity is that I am a DU student and an activist of July."

The VP candidate also outlined plans to strengthen academia, which include merit- and research-based teacher recruitment and promotion, teacher evaluation, higher research budgets, modernisation of libraries and labs,

reopening the e-library, scholarships, building new halls, improving food and healthcare facilities, prioritising security for women on campus, and forming an effective sexual harassment prevention cell. "If a proper academic environment is ensured, other problems will gradually disappear."

On hall-based politics, Kayem argued that students no longer wanted organisation or committee-based politics and suggested that students' opinions on this matter could be sought through surveys. "Since only 10-15 percent of students are actively political, imposing politics against the

majority's will would harm their interests. The solution lies not in depoliticisation or single party dominance but in consensus."

Expressed concern about the election atmosphere, he said, "I'm hopeful of students' participation, but the unprofessional behaviour of the administration and election commission is worrying. There are allegations that the commission, proctor, and provosts are helping execute the agenda of a certain party. The whole nation is invested in the Ducusu election. If teachers act professionally and ensure a free, fair, and credible election, it could set a lasting example of

democracy for the country."

Addressing attempts by opponents to question Shibir's position on the 1971 Liberation War, he called them "irrelevant and divisive". "1971 is our existence. The martyrs are the greatest sons of this land. We've never compromised on independence, sovereignty, or territorial integrity. In crucial moments like the July uprising, we proved our stance. So questioning us over 1971 is simply divisive."

Kayem went on to say that he did not believe other candidates were his rivals. "We are comrades-in-arms, all working to build a new Bangladesh, beginning with

Dhaka University."

Regarding campaign expenses, he said his panel was operating within its means. "We are campaigning with our own capacity and with support from alumni, as per Shibir's constitution."

Finally, Kayem urged voters to seize the moment. "In the past 100 years, we collectively failed to build the expected academic environment of our university. After the July uprising, we now have a historic opportunity. It's time to choose the right leadership, transform Dhaka University into an academic institution, and build the dream campus."

Will launch 'one ID, all solution system'

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commitment to them and did whatever I could during the July movement."

Baker, a student of geology, added that contesting in Ducusu polls was never his plan when he enrolled at the university. "My dream was to see Sheikh Hasina fall. Fortunately, I was a direct participant in that movement and the uprising. After returning to campus post-August 5, I re-engaged in solving student issues. My years of cultural and political struggle made me realise that if I can be a Ducusu member, it will be possible to address problems faster."

He said their panel, backed by Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad, a student

body formed by former SAD coordinators, was created to bring inclusive and competent leadership to Ducusu. "We are hopeful of winning because our candidates have always been part of the student movements and are qualified in their respective fields."

If elected, Baker's prime goal would be to transform Dhaka University into a research-based institution. He promised to introduce a "One Student, One Bed Policy" to solve the accommodation problem within three months, ensure quality meals at dormitories, and launch a "One ID, All Solutions" system" to provide services such as access to libraries, the registrar's office, and

transport.

He also pledged transparency in teacher recruitment, introduction of teacher evaluation system and full-time PhD programmes, lab modernisation, and the recruitment of teaching or research assistants to involve students in research.

concerns, Baker admitted that female students' security is still not fully ensured. "But the solution is simple -- deploy Ansar or specialised security teams in front of dormitories. We have also started tackling moral policing and bullying of female students, online and offline, offering legal and psychological support," he said.

Baker urged students to elect honest and committed candidates. "If I meet that standard, vote for me. My dream is not just to win an election, but to take Dhaka University -- and eventually the country -- towards a knowledge-based society. It will not happen in a day and may take 10-15 years, but I'm prepared to begin this journey."

Highlighting safety

by their officials. "The international situation is both fluid and chaotic," he added.

"It is the right choice for both sides to be friends who have good neighbourly and amicable ties, partners who enable each other's success, and to have the dragon and the elephant dance together," Xi said, referring to traditional symbols of the two nations. "As long as they adhere to our overall direction of being partners rather than rivals ... China-India relations can maintain stability and move forward over the long run."

Modi said India was "committed" to taking their

countries' relations forward "on the basis of mutual trust and respect," and referenced the warming of relations, including an easing of tensions along their disputed Himalayan border -- where the two fought a deadly skirmish in 2020.

"The interests of 2.8 billion people in both our countries are tied to our cooperation," he added. Both leaders discussed the need to expand trade and investment ties against the backdrop of US tariffs, and then slapping an additional 25 percent duties on the country as punishment for importing Russian oil and gas, which Washington sees as helping to fund Putin's war in Ukraine.

Both China and India are major purchasers of

Russian oil, though China has yet to be targeted with such measures, reports CNN.

Those purchases could be a point of discussion today, when Modi is expected to hold bilateral talks with Putin, part of his wider diplomacy as he joins a two-day summit of the Beijing and Moscow-backed regional security grouping known as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

In addition to China, Russia, and India, the group includes Iran, Pakistan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, while other leaders from across Asia and Middle East will also join.