

Unrest at Pabna university

Students, staff clash leaves 20 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 20 persons were injured in a clash between the students and staff of Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST) yesterday over the alleged assault on a teacher of the university by a staff.

According to witnesses, some of the students were staging a demonstration protesting the Friday's assault on Prof Dr Abdul Alim, dean of social science faculty, in front of the university's administration building around 9:00am.

At one stage, the staff suddenly started hurling brickbats and attacked them with sticks, leaving five of the students injured.

Following the incident, other students came out of the classrooms and dormitories and ransacked the build-

ing and vandalised around 12 motor-bikes belonging to the university staff. The agitating students also vandalised the vice chancellor's office.

Soon, another clash ensued between the students and staff that left at least 15 injured.

Of them, condition of Jamshed Kumar, president of employees' union, and Md Rafik, section officer, is critical. They were undergoing treatment at Pabna General Hospital, said police.

Around noon, police and the university authorities brought the situation under control, said Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station.

Many of the agitating students said they would continue their demonstration until those who assaulted Prof Alim and attacked

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them were punished.

Sajib Hossain, a student of Bangla department, said, "We were protesting the assault on Prof Alim by a class IV employee when the staff swooped on us."

Some of the staff also assaulted another teacher a few months ago and they kept on misbehaving with us but the authorities continue to turn a blind eye, alleged Sajedur Rahman Siam, a student of Information and Communication Engineering.

Contacted, Prof Alim alleged that a security guard of the university assaulted him on Friday during the admission tests when he asked the guard to remove some of the boxes and papers lying in front of the gate.

The guard refused to do so saying it was not his duty, alleged Prof Alim. At one point, he [the guard] started hurling expletives and pushed him hard, he alleged. "When the students heard the news, they became angry," he added.

Meanwhile, the university staff had decided to begin an indefinite work abstention from today, unless the authorities take action against Prof Alim, said Faruk Hossain Chowdhury, assistant director of the university's public relations. "Prof Alim influenced the students to attack the staff," he alleged.

Contacted, Proctor Awal Kabir Joy said the situation is under control now. The university authorities held an urgent meeting yesterday afternoon in this regard, he informed.

"We have decided to form an inquiry committee to probe the incident. If anyone is found guilty, stern action will be taken," said the proctor.