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Violent protests over new exam system, 200 hurt Polytechnic students run amock in 7 instts

Over 200 people were injured, including policemen, as polytechnic students on Tuesday clashed with law-enforcers during demonstrations in different districts against a new examination system enforced by the Technical Education Board, reports UNB.

According to reports the unruly protestors also went on vandalism in their institutions and damaged several vehicles during their blockade programme staged to press for cancellation of the exam system.

The worst outbreaks of violence were reported from Rajshahi where over 100 people, including 10 cops, were

injured in widespread clashes between police and students in and around Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute campus in the morning.

During the three-hour running battles, police fired rubber bullets and teargas shells on the protestors in their frantic bid to bring the situation under control, official sources and witnesses said.

The law-enforcers arrested seven students during the widespread clashes and took them to Boalia police station.

Meanwhile, the students damaged five cars, including police car, during the ram-

page-rated worst in recent times in this northwestern city.

Campus sources said the students of Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute, demanding changes in subject-based examinations, brought out procession at about 9 am.

Trouble erupted when police resisted the students and charged baton on them. The students also hurled brickbats at law enforcers for reprisals," says a spot account of the scenes.

Chased by the police, the students shut down the main gate of the campus and dam-

aged at least 15 rooms, including the office room of the principal, examination control room and classrooms of the institute.

"At one stage, police entered the campus and started beating the unruly students with sticks and rifle butts and dispersed them," the report said.

But the students wouldn't give in. They regrouped and chased back the police personnel, the sources said.

With reinforcements, the law-enforcers again chased the students, charged baton

(See Page 11 Col. 2)

Polytechnic students

(From Page 1 Col. 7)

on them when the students took to the streets in Shah Niyamatullah and Shah Monayem hostels. The cops also lobbed teargas canisters and fired rubber bullets into the hostels.

They chased the students and beat them up at the nearby market, too, panicking the businessmen.

After receiving the information, City Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton went to the scene at about 10:30 am and called upon the students to cool down.

The police went out of the campus when the Mayor asked deputy police commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Sajjadul Karim to pull out his force.

The Mayor assured the students that "final decision in this regard would come after the meeting of Educa-

tion, which lasted nearly three hours.

The unruly students also damaged 20 vehicles partially during the protests and launched vandalism at Kotbari police outpost.

Later, police high officials intervened and brought the situation under control at about 1:00pm on assurance of meeting the student demand in consultation with the authorities.

Back to the campus, the students ransacked the office of Principal Abdur Rauf and confined him inside for getting specific deadline for meeting their demands.

Police picked up seven students from the spot on charge of their involvement in ransacking activities.

Traffic on the busy highway resumed at 1pm when the law-enforcers calmed the melee.

Polytechnic Institute Principal Joydul Abedin said he would take initiative to have the arrested students released and for treatment of the injured students.

Some of the injured students were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Transport movement halted on the Rajshahi-Naogaon highway for three hours amid the troubles.

Vehicular movement on the highway became normal at about 12 noon.

Local police said 10 cops were injured during the campus rioting.

They were admitted to RMCH. Condition of three of them was said to be "critical".

As per the previous referred examination rules, if a student could not come suc-

cessful in a certain subject, the student could appear at the examination every year until s/he passed it. But, under the new rules, the unsuccessful students can reappear only once.

In Comilla, around 50 people, including policemen, were injured as the students of Comilla Polytechnic Institute clashed with RAB troops and police.

Witnesses said some students of the institute brought out a procession on the campus at about 10am demanding cancellation of the new rules.

At one stage of the demo, the protesters took to the street and put barricades on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Batabaria, Nandanpur, Haratal and Jangalia areas, disrupting traffic on the busy route for several hours.

A violent clash broke out between the law-enforcers and the students as they tried to resist the rowdy protestors.

"The area turned into a veritable battleground as the students attacked the law-enforcers with rods and sticks and pelted brickbats while the law-enforcers fired some 100 teargas shells and rubber bullets and charged baton on the students," says a firsthand report.

At least 50 people, including a number of police, were injured during the clash that

Dhaka highway to demand cancellation of the new exam system.

When police tried to remove the barricades, the agitated students attacked them, triggering a violent clash. Chase-and counter-chase took place during the two-hour melee that left 50 people injured.

The unruly students also damaged three buses, two police vehicles and 20 shops while police lobbed teargas and charged baton to disperse the protestors.

Later, the students removed the roadblocks at about 12 noon on assurance of meeting their demands.

Twelve of the injured were admitted to General Hospital and private clinics.

In Rangpur, the students of Rangpur Polytechnic College clashed with police near the campus at noon, leaving over 30 people injured. Witnesses said clash erupted when police resisted the angry students from blocking the nearby road.

The law-enforcers also fired 10 teargas shells to quell the trouble. In Sherpur, the students of Sherpur Polytechnic College put barricades on the Dhaka-Sherpur highway in front of Bhatshah Polytechnic College at about 9am on the same demand, disrupting traffic for two hours.