

JAGANNATH UNIV 50 hurt in cop action

Protest continues against grabbing of hall by AL leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 50 people, including teachers and students, were injured as police charged truncheons and fired rubber bullets to disperse a demonstration of Jagannath University students in Old Dhaka yesterday.

Around 10:45 am, a clash ensued between police and students when law enforcers resisted their attempt to recover Tibet Hall, which is allegedly occupied by lawmaker and Awami League leader Haji Mohammad Selim.

Vehicular movement on the roads in front of the campus was disrupted as the clash continued till 2:30pm.

Students, however, claimed that over 150 of them sustained injuries in the incident.

The students have been staging demonstrations since February 12, demanding "recovery" of their 11 dormitories, including Tibet Hall, at different parts in Old Dhaka from illegal occupation.

A section of the hall premises had been used to build Gulshan Ara City Shopping Complex in the area, students said.

Around 8:30am yesterday, students took to the street and started demonstrating at the main gate of the campus. They marched through Roy Shaheb Bazar and Tanubazar areas and made for Tibet Hall at Wiseghat.

As the students reached near Moon Complex, some 30 yards from the hall, they were obstructed by police who took position there earlier.

"As we began chanting slogans against the illegal occupation, police, without any instigation, started firing tear gas canisters and rubber bullets on us, leaving many of us injured," said Jamal Hossain, a student.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

50 hurt

FROM PAGE 16

Facing police action, the agitating students took position at the university's main gate and fought with police several times by hurling brick chips on them, witnesses said.

Panic gripped the locals when students burnt tyres at different points on Jonson Road, blocking traffic movement.

The injured students and teachers took primary treatment at nearby Sumona Hospital and the National Medical College and Hospital.

Chairman of Department of English Prof Nasiruddin Ahmed told The Daily Star that he sustained injuries from rubber bullet.

"Police fired rubber bullets all of a sudden when I was trying to calm the students," he said. Prof Nasiruddin is now undergoing treatment at Square Hospital.

Harun-ur-Rashid, deputy commissioner (DC) of police of Lalbagh zone, said they tried to resist the students who marched towards Gulshan Ara City Shopping

Complex and unlawfully tried to "occupy" it.

Police lobbed tear gas canisters to defend themselves, he added.

Prof Mijanur Rahman, vice chancellor of the university, called an urgent syndicate meeting at his residence yesterday evening.

After the meeting, the VC told The Daily Star that they would continue their effort to "recover the dormitories". He also urged the relevant government authorities to help them.

"Despite today's [yesterday] incident, academic activities, including classes and exams, will continue," he added.

Meanwhile, teachers of Jagannath University Sikkhak Samiti demanded the removal of DC of Lalbagh zone and OC Moniruzzaman of Kotwali Police Station within next 24 hours.

Protesting the incident, the university teachers will hold a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club this morning.