

CLASH OVER ASSAULT

20 teachers, students hurt in Magura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 20 teachers and students of Magura Government Polytechnic Institute were injured yesterday as police fired rubber bullets to disperse them from Kushtia-Jhenidah highway.

The students, later joined by their teachers, blockaded the highway near their institute around 10:00am to demand the arrest of a local who had assaulted a teacher the day before.

Azmul Huda, officer-in-charge of Magura Sadar Police Station, however claimed, "We fired rubber bullets only when the students attacked us."

The authorities of the institute, despite requests made by the police, did not cooperate in bringing the situation under control, he said, adding that five police personnel also sustained injuries during the clash.

Later in the afternoon, police arrested the teacher's alleged attacker who was identified as Mushtaq Ahmed, son of Ratan Bishwas from Magura Sadar upazila.

Mushtaq "assaulted" Mokhlesur Rahman, a teacher at the polytechnic institute, on Thursday around 7:30pm while he was on his way home following an altercation with Mushtaq during a cricket match held earlier in the institute playground, the OC said, quoting students and teachers.

The cricket match between two teams of students of the polytechnic was organised by the polytechnic institute authorities in commemoration of the Victory Day.

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20 teachers

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During the match, Mokhles expelled a group of rowdy locals, led by Mushtaq, who became involved in a brawl with the students.

Enraged, Mushtaq later in the evening physically assaulted the teacher while the teacher was going home.

Hearing the news, agitated students started to gather near their institute on Friday morning to demand Mushtaq's arrest, said OC Azmul, adding that at one stage the students and teachers blocked traffic on the highway.

Police had to club the crowd with truncheons after they ignored police's request to clear the highway and allow traffic movement, he said.

The demonstrators then locked in clashes with the police for about an hour and police fired rubber bullets when the students attacked them with sticks and stones, he claimed.

The students and teachers injured during the incident were undergoing treatment at Magura Sadar Hospital.

A few of the injured teachers were identified as Sudipto Kumar Singho, Rakibul Hasan, Babul Kumar Palit and Bidduyt Ali.

Sajal Mondol, Idris Ali, Sagar Imam and Ibrahim Hossain were identified among the injured students.

Munir Hossain, principal of the polytechnic institute, demanded immediate investigation into the

unjustified use of brute force on the demonstrators by the police.

The police could have averted the incident if they assured the demonstrators of arresting of the attacker, he added.

Magura Police Superintendent Munibur Rahman said police already arrested the alleged attacker and process was underway to file a case against him.

"We are investigating the firing of rubber bullets by police," he added.