

## Sylhet MC College closed for indefinite period

Zaman Monir, Sylhet

THE authorities declared Sylhet MC College and its student hostels closed for an indefinite period on Monday following the fire in 3 blocks of the century-old dormitory that broke out after a fight between activists of the Bangladesh Chhatra League and Islami Chhatra Shibir.

The fire brigade and civil defence authorities assessed the damage to be worth Tk 1.5 crore, but the principle of the college believes the amount will be double that amount.

The college authorities recorded a general diary on Monday and a student also filed a case with the Shah Paran Police, sources said.

Police arrested 15 Shibir activists, including Sylhet Government College unit president Mamun Hossain and MC College Hostel unit president Rasel, for their involvement in the incident.

The events leading up to

the fire on Sunday began during a friendly match between activists of the 2 organisations. An altercation between supporters, led to the ICS men, apparently severely hacking a BCL activist, Uzzal, at the dormitory in the evening.

A group of BCL activists launched an attack against ICS leaders and supporters at around 7:30pm, but they were forced to retreat in the face of the strong resistance by the rival activists, sources at the dormitory said.

An hour later, some 200 BCL activists, armed with hockey sticks, machetes and iron rods returned to the hostel to search out the ICS men.

At least 25 activists of the BCL and ICS were injured during the fighting.

During this time, sources amongst the residential students said that BCL activists allegedly set fire to the first, second and fourth blocks of the hostel and vandalised windowpanes and doors of

the remaining three blocks.

Despite firefighters being informed of the arson, they arrived at the scene an hour and half later at 10:30pm.

By then 3 units of the college dormitory, including documents, computers, laptops and all other valuables belonging to residents of 42 rooms were already damaged in the fire. Safiq, a resident of the hostel's fourth block said.

Students of the college claimed that establishing dominance over the hostel was the main reason behind Sunday's clashes between BCL and ICS.

Both of the BCL district president Pankaj Pura, kayastha and ICS city president Anwarul Wadud Apu, who were at the spot during the clashes, denied their involvement in the fire.

The college authorities suspended all academic activities on Monday and convened an emergency meeting to take further decisions. Afterwards, MC College

principal Diresh Chandra Sarker told New Age that a committee to probe the incident leading up to the events had been set up.

A three-member committee headed by the vice-principal AJ Helal Bhuiyan has been formed to probe the incident and a general diary has been recorded with the Shah Paran police, the principal added.

He said the losses would be far higher than the figure estimated by the fire brigade. He mentioned the accurate amount would be sorted out after the report by the probe committee is published.

Meanwhile, Shawquat Hasan Manik, a resident of the college hostel filed a case with the Shah Paran Police on charges of assault against him and his fellow students.

Shah Paran police officer Enamul Manowar said, '15 activists of Shibir have been detained so far for their suspected involvement and are preparing to produce the detainees before court.'