

FELLOW'S DEATH

Madrasah students go on rampage

Railway station, schools, offices attacked, rail service disrupted, 50 injured

Staff Correspondent

THE death of a local madrasah student Monday night triggered a day-long sporadic clashes on Tuesday between Madrasah students and law enforcers, suspending rail traffic communication through Brahmanbaria for hours and forcing the authorities to call para-military

force to maintain law and order in the border district.

Police launched inquiry into the death of the student, Masudur Rahman, 25, from injuries allegedly sustained in an earlier attack on Jamiya Islamia Yunusia Madrasha by police and ruling party-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League activists.

Tuesday morning, fel-

low students and sympathisers staged demonstrations throughout the town demanding justice for the killing and the attack, and put up street blockades by setting fire to tyres and logs, New Age correspondent in Brahmanbaria reported.

They also attacked a dozen schools and offices, including the office of local

lawmaker, Obaidul Muk-tadir Chowdhury.

On Tuesday night, senior officials from the police and district administration held a meeting with the madrasah teachers, who called the strike earlier in the day in protest of the attack and killing.

Emerging out of a two-hour long negotiation between the madrasah teach-

ers and authorities, Jamiya Islamia Yunusia Madrasha management committee's senior vice president Bazlur Rahman told New Age that the strike had been called off following the successful meeting.

'We hope situation will improve shortly....' said Bazlur.

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The deputy commissioner, Mohammad Musharraf Hossain, who also attended the meeting, also confirmed that the authorities had met the demands of the protestors and Tk one lakh would be given to the victim's family immediately.

The police headquarters officials told New Age that a three-member inquiry committee, led by Chittagong range additional deputy inspector general Mahbubur Rahman, was set up while both district police assistant superintendent Taposh Ranjan Ghosh and district police station officer-in-charge Akul Chandra Biswash were withdrawn from their positions.

The railways officials said traffic communication was suspended between 10:00am and 6:30pm and additional personnel were

deployed at the Brahmanbaria rail station following two attacks by the demonstrating mob.

Rail communication resumed around 6:30pm, said railways additional director (operations) general Habibur Rahman, adding, 'we are now examining the damage during the attacks.'

The railways officials said that operation systems, especially ticketing computers, were damaged while valuables were looted and important documents were torched in the twin attacks carried out—one at about 10am and another at 12noon—when the officials at the station fled locking behind the office.

The schedule of over 20 trains on Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet routes was disrupted and fishplate was damaged as the protestors put up blockade near

the Brahmanbaria station.

Tuesday's clash left nearly 50 people, including police, journalists and students, injured.

The police and locals said that ruling party supporter Rony Ahmed has earlier engaged in a scuffle with the local madrasah students following an altercation.

Later, Rony, accompanied by local Chhatra League leaders, had carried out an attack on the madrasah on Monday as the students sought help from locals for rescue.

Police allegedly used tear gas, rubber bullets and live bullets to bring the situation under control, leaving over two dozen others, including police members, injured on Monday night.

District Quami Chhatra Oikko Parishad Secretary Khaled Musharraf alleged police had killed Masudur

Rahman on their entry into the madrasah.

District civil surgeon Hasina Akhter said that a postmortem was conducted to determine whether he had been shot dead.

Following Monday's incident, madrasah students along with locals started demonstrations as soon as the news of Masudur Rahman's death spread.

Border Guard Bangladesh, Rapid Action Battalion, General Railway Police and Railways Nirapatta Bahini were deployed to assist police.

A panicky situation was prevailing in the district headquarters and road traffic communication remained almost suspended, while most of the shops remained shut.

There are reportedly over 110 Quami madrasahs in the border district.