

The Daily Star

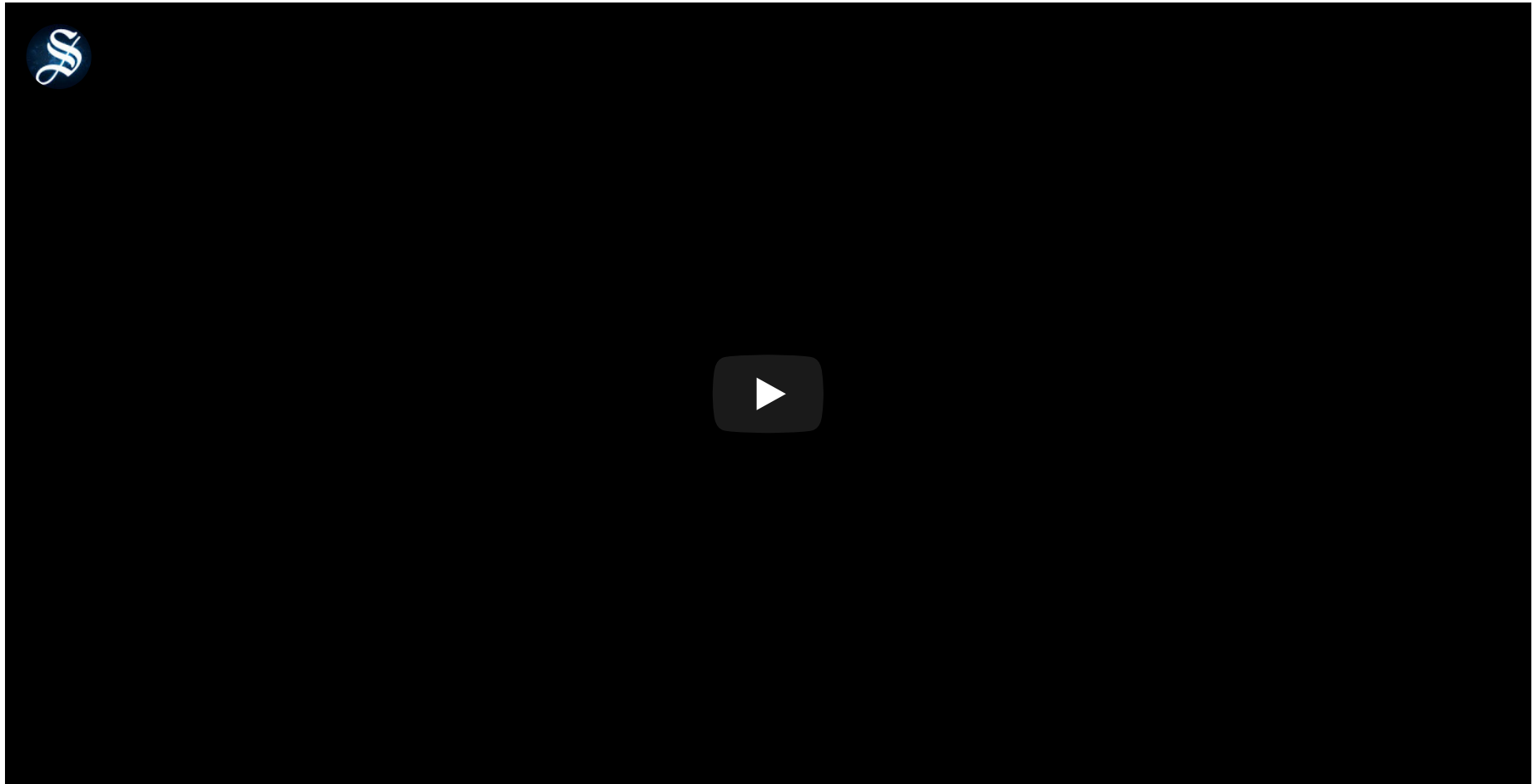
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43 injured as BCL factions clash

BCL men beat up 6 journos in Sylhet, JNU

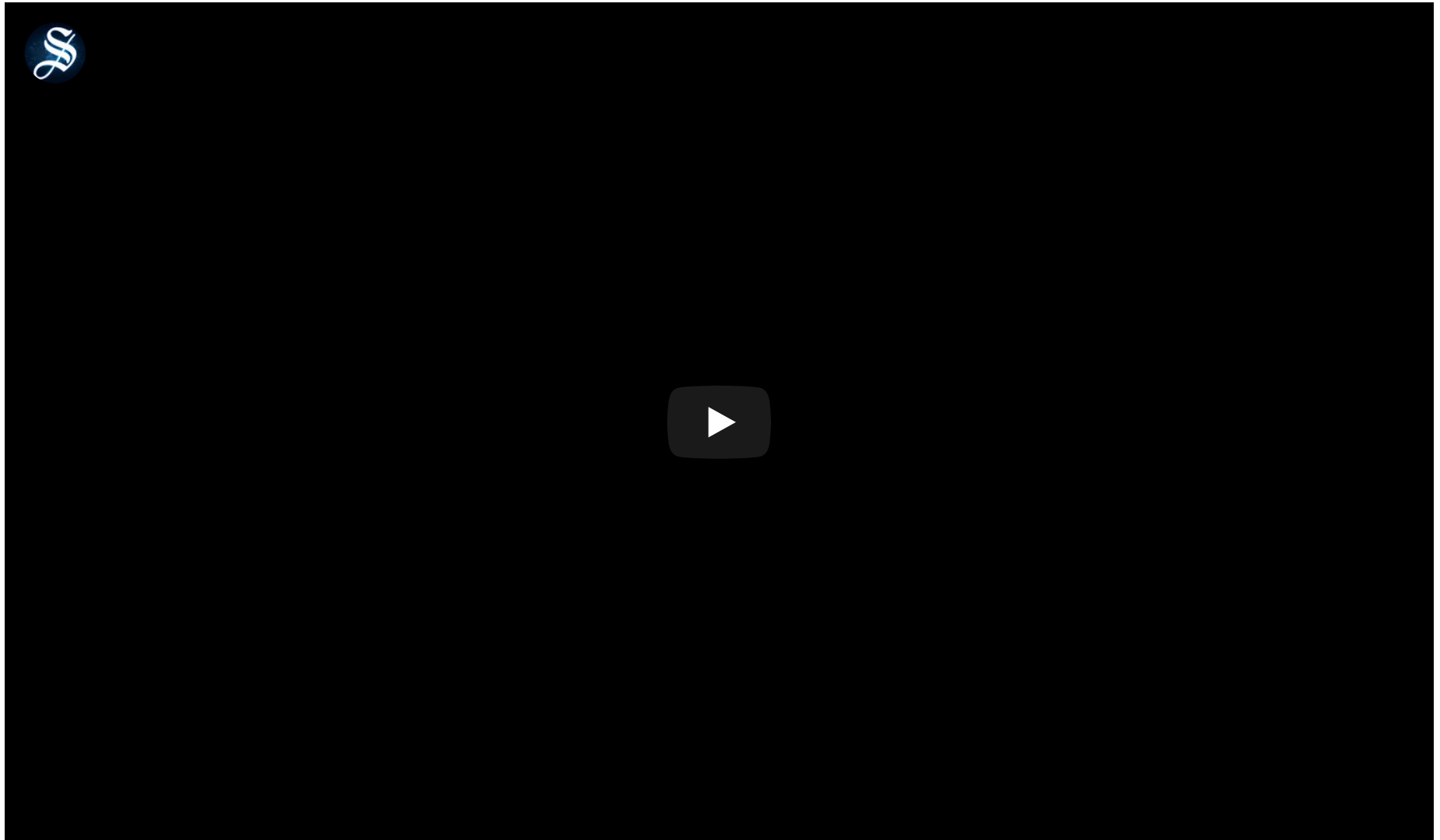
Star Report



At least 43 people, including six journalists and two policemen, were injured as factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League activists clashed in the capital and Sylhet yesterday.

In the capital's Jagannath University (JnU), clashes over establishing supremacy between two groups of BCL left 39, including two reporters and two police officers, injured.

In Sylhet, four photographers were beaten up by alleged BCL activists when they attempted to take pictures of a clash between two BCL groups on the campus of Murari Chand College.



The JnU's clash started around noon. Armed with iron rods, sharp weapons and sticks, around 250 BCL men, mostly wearing helmets, swooped on each other. The pitched battle continued until police intervened around 10 minutes later, witnesses said.

One of the rivaling groups is led by suspended BCL committee president Tarikul Islam and general secretary Sheikh Jaynul Abedin Rasel, insiders said.

The other group is led by Ibrahim Farazi, Ashraful Islam Titon and Hosne Mobarak Rishat, they added.

There was tension on the campus since morning.

Several crude bombs were exploded during another clash between the groups around 3:15pm.

University reporters Latiful Islam of the Samakal and Rakibul Islam Rakib of the Sangbad were beaten up by the “president-secretary group” when as they tried to take pictures of the clash.

Police rescued them and sent them to a hospital, witnesses said.

Police fired tear gas canisters around 3:25pm to calm the situation. The area remained tense until the evening.

In the clashes, Additional Deputy Commissioner Humayun Kabir and Inspector Niru Miah of Dhaka Metropolitan Police were injured.

Amid tension and clashes, many classes were hampered, students said.





Holding sticks and sharp weapons, a group of alleged Bangladesh Chhatra League activists walks in front of MC College in Sylhet during a clash between two factions of the pro-Awami League student body yesterday afternoon. Photo: Sheikh Naser

There has been growing tension between the groups since January. Following multiple clashes, the JnU BCL committee was temporarily suspended on February 3 by central leaders.

The other group led by leaders who are eyeing leadership positions have been trying to establish supremacy on campus and demanding abolition of the suspended committee. Both the groups have been blaming each other for the clashes.

On February 13, Tarikul and Rasel were confined to a room on the campus for nearly two hours. Police had to rescue them.

Asked, Vice-chancellor Mizanur Rahman told The Daily Star, "A university cannot run if the clashes continue for a whole day. The authorities of this organisation should solve this problem soon.

"The university authorities will take action if any injured person files complaints to the authorities," he added.

Talking with The Daily Star, BCL General Secretary Golam Rabbani said they were considering whether to dissolve the JnU BCL committee altogether.

PHOTOGRAPHERS BEATEN IN SYLHET

Four photographers Yousuf Ali of the Samakal, Asmit Nandy Mazumder of the Bhorer Kagoj, Mithu Das Joy of the Shubho Pratidin and Kawser Ahmed of a local online portal were attacked when they tried to take photos of the clash on MC College campus.

Students said the clash took place over who would get to sit where during an event organised by campus cultural organisation Mohona to celebrate spring.

The activists could not be reached for comment.

Akhter Hossain, officer-in-charge of Shahporan Police Station, said the situation under control and additional police were deployed there.

He added that he was not aware of any attack on journalists.

There are no BCL committees in the college, Sylhet city and the district. However, there are many activists in the MC College.

Injured journalist Asmit Nandy of the Bhorer Kagoj said, “The BCL activists started the clash around 12:00pm. We [journalists] were trying to take pictures of the battle. But all of a sudden, some of them started beating us up.”

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