

# Assault on Polytech Principal: BCL men wanted to pass without examination

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Anwar Ali and Arafat Rahaman

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During an exam for second semester students in September, the teachers of Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute noticed, to their astonishment, that some of the students were whiling away the hours.

“They were not writing at all,” Principal Farid Uddin Ahmed said yesterday, describing how he drew the wrath of Bangladesh Chhatra League activists who would throw him into a pond about two months later.

When the teachers asked the students what was going on, the examinees simply said that their senior BCL leaders assured them of good grades even if they didn’t write anything on the answer script, the principal said.

Eventually, at least 133, mostly BCL activists, of 455 examinees got 0, 1 or 2 in the 90-mark exam.

The BCL men then asked the authorities to make sure the activists pass the exam.

“If such students pass the exams, we’ll have some useless graduates,” Ahmed told The Daily Star.

After he was assaulted on Saturday, Ahmed filed a case with Chandrima Police Station, accusing 50 unnamed and eight named BCL men.

Police arrested five BCL men yesterday.

The Directorate of Technical Education formed a three-member committee headed by Director SM Ferdous Alam to investigate the incident in three days.

Last month, about 150 BCL activists did not attend their midterm examinations. The administration then asked them to bring in their guardians to the institute before the final exams.

The students then tried and failed to settle the matter, the principal said.

Ahmed said that he was warned of consequences by his students at that point.

On Saturday morning, the last day of registering for the final exams, a group of students led by the BCL unit Joint Secretary Kamal Hossain Sourav met him and asked him to allow two students to register for the exams even though they did not have the required class attendance, Ahmed said, adding that he refused.

He was attacked a few hours later.

The teachers, students and officials of the institute refrained from academic activities yesterday and demonstrated on campus. They demanded suspension of student politics on the campus and tore posters and banners of BCL.

They alleged that the BCL activists often took money from students promising them of better grades.

### **A TORTURE CELL?**

Adjacent to the administration office, there is room-1119. The BCL activists often took students to that room and beat them up until they gave money, many students alleged.

The authorities broke into the room yesterday and found iron rods and pipes that were allegedly used to beat students up.

The teachers said they informed the police and local Awami League leaders several times about BCL's activities, but no one did anything.

In December last year, BCL men demanded Tk 300 from each of the nearly 4,000 students and beat up those who did not pay, the principal said.

Mizanur Rahman, a student, was beaten up in broad daylight at the tennis court for not paying the money.

English teacher Nurullah told reporters yesterday that BCL men chased him when he tried to save a student from being beaten up.

Institute officials said most of the BCL men, who are engaged in criminal activities have already graduated. But they did not leave the campus.

Five of the eight named BCL men, who are accused of assaulting the principal, are former students. They are Shanto, Boni, Hasibul Islam Shanto, Salman alias Tony, and Maruf. The three current students are Kamal Hossain Sourav, Murad and Hasibul.

The central committee of BCL yesterday expelled Kamal Hossain Sourav from the organisation and suspended all BCL activities at the institute.

BCL unit President Mehedi Hasan Regan could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Unit General Secretary Rashed Rahman, who graduated from the institute in 2017, said, “There is some truth in the allegations, but all of them are not true.”