

Police 'silent spectators', later raid three halls

BCL leader shot dead: Fierce gunbattle rocks DU campus

By DU Correspondent

An activist of Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League was shot dead and two others were bullet-hit on the Dhaka University campus during an hour-long gunfight with activists of BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal yesterday noon.

Partho Protim Acharja, a Masters student of Mass Communication and Journalism and a central leader of BCL, was shot in the chest in front of the Surya Sen Hall canteen while he was leading a group of armed activists in the encounter with the JCD, witnesses said. He died shortly after he was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. He was a resident student of Jagannath Hall.

The two injured students are Jewel and Jahangir. Jewel, a final year student of Zoology, was bullet-hit in the abdomen and Jahangir, a final year student of Political Science was injured in the head while watching the battle through a window of the Surya Sen Hall. They were admitted to the DMCH.

The trouble began when a JCD procession, coming from the city's Tejgaon College, was chased by the BCL activists near the Madhu's canteen in a sequel to a gunfight between the two organisations on the previous day when a truck driver was bullet-hit and a student was stabbed.

An uneasy calm was prevailing on the campus since then.

In the face of the sudden attack yesterday, the JCD activists ran towards their "safe zone", Jasimuddin, Ziaur Rahman and Bangabandhu hall areas, witnesses said. But the BCL activists continued the chase, firing shots.

Reaching near the Jasimuddin Hall, the JCD activists also started firing shots from in front of Ziaur Rahman Hall. Partha was shot at that time, witnesses said. A cow, owned by an employee of Jasimuddin

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Activists of a student body attacking a member of the rival student body with a cleaver during clashes on the Dhaka University campus yesterday. — Star photo

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Hall, which was grazing in the field, was caught in the cross-fire and killed.

Lethal weapons including cleavers were also used during the fight.

Hundreds of panicked students and admission seekers were seen running for safety while police, posted near the Madhu's canteen, went behind the petrol van, probably for shelter, when the gun-battle began at around 11:30 am. Police forces, posted at the entrances of all the dormitories for male students also played the role of spectators during the gunfight, witnesses said. Yesterday was also the last day for submission of admission forms by the admission seekers.

Police however swung into action an hour after the gunfight, lobbing about 30 tear gas shells and resorting to baton charge on students at Jasimuddin Hall, causing further sufferings to the scared students and admission seekers and leaving some injured. Police picked up 65 persons from the Jasimuddin Hall. Police recovered one

pistol, a hand grenade and 305 bullets during the raid.

Police also raided three JCD-dominated halls, Zia Hall, Bangabandhu Hall and Jasimuddin Hall after the gunfight.

Soon after Partho was killed, angry BCL activists set on fire the office of the DUCSU VP and several rooms of the DUCSU building near the Madhu's canteen and some rooms belonging to JCD activists in different DU dormitories. Fire fighters later extinguished the fire.

The BCL activists also "captured" the three JCD-dominated halls — Zia Hall, Bangabandhu Hall and Jasimuddin Hall — on the campus just after police raided those halls and brought out processions on the campus. Some rooms of JCD activists in the three halls and in the Jagannath Hall were ransacked by BCL activists.

With this, all the 15 DU dormitories excepting the three for female students, went under the control of BCL.

The agitated BCL activists, after "capturing" the halls, damaged portraits of BNP chief

Begum Khaleda Zia and Ziaur Rahman and burnt some posters of JCD and BNP in those dormitories.

The body of Partho who hails from Ghior, Manikganj, was later handed over to BCL activists by the DMCH authorities. The BCL workers brought out a procession on the campus carrying the body in the afternoon.

The Dhaka University Syndicate, at an emergency meeting later, formed a five-member committee to probe the incident. The committee, headed by Prof. ATM Zahurul Huq, has been asked to submit its report within two weeks.

The Syndicate also requested the law enforcing agencies to take legal action against the persons involved.

Partho Protim Acharya, a student of the university and a BCL leader, was killed during the clash between Chhatra League (BCL) and Chhatra Dal (JCD).

The Syndicate also decided that the provosts of halls will take necessary steps to check identity cards of the resident

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