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50 hurt in student-cop clash at Dhaka College

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More than 50 people including students, teachers and police were injured in a three-hour clash between Dhaka College students and the law enforcers on and around the campus yesterday.

Earlier, the students got infuriated after some street hawkers and shopkeepers had handed over a college student to police after a beating, when he and some of his college mates were beating a human hauler driver. The students chased and caught the driver at Nilkhet intersection after he had refused to pick them up from across the campus, as there is no stoppage for the public transportation.

Later, the students returned to their college and spread rumour among their college mates that shop owners were keeping two of their fellows captive in Nilkhet market and another one was injured after a human hauler had rammed him.

As the rumour spread, several hundred students came out of the campus and started pelting the street hawkers and shop owners opposite the campus with brickbats. They also blockaded a section of the Mirpur Road in front of the college, prompting the law enforcers to go into action.

Police fired shotguns twice and 65 teargas shells, and resorted to baton charges to quell the students who were hurling brickbats indiscriminately at the law enforcers.

Students alleged that police even charged batons entering into class rooms and the college dinning room. Six teachers including Vice-principal Dr Anwarul Alam Khan were injured, caught in the middle of a clash, when they were trying to refrain the students from battling the law enforcers.

Vehicular traffic on busy Mirpur Road remained halted for over two hours during the melee leaving a severe traffic jam in the adjoining areas. Besides, owners of shops in the busy strip of malls shut down their business establishments to avoid vandalism.

The agitated students damaged at least eight vehicles on the road while police picked up four persons, a student and three outsiders.

The clash erupted after police had chased the students who blockaded Mirpur Road and were raining brickbats on street vendors and other shopkeepers ignoring police request to stop around 1:45pm.

After the chase, students retaliated and chased police by hurling brickbats at them leading to the clash. The angry students burnt tires and set fire to the furniture that were being sold in front of the college campus on the pavements.

More than 300 police personnel including riot police stormed the college campus around 3:00pm charging batons and firing teargas shells on the students and teachers even inside the classrooms.

Deputy Commissioner of Ramna Zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Atiqur Rahman said around nine police personnel were injured in the clash.

Fourteen of the injured were treated in Dhaka Medical College Hospital while the rest were treated in local clinics.

Tension on the college campus was high till 4:30pm, when the last report came in.