ational Taiwan University students and other protesters take to the stage yesterday after protests over the rental of the university's athletic field for the "Sing! China: Shanghai-Taipei Music Festival" led to the concert being canceled.
Photo: Chou Yen-yu, Taipei Times

The "Sing! China: Shanghai-Taipei Music Festival" scheduled for yesterday at National Taiwan University's (NTU) athletic field came to an abrupt end following protests by pro-Taiwan independence groups and students at the school against the university's decision to rent the venue for the event.

The site quickly descended into further dissarray, as members of pro-unification groups joined the fray.

Three students were reportedly injured by a member of the pro-unification Patriot Association (□□□□□), police said.

At the center of the furor was the school's decision to rent the athletic field for the event, which was cosponsored by the Taipei Department of Cultural Affairs and the Chinese reality television show *Sing! China*.

Representatives of the school's student council on Saturday said that the event had not only caused structural damage to the facilities, but also denied NTU students and sports teams use of the field and its track.

The festival is included in memorandums of understanding on cultural and arts events signed by Taipei and Shanghai, but posters for the event called the school “Taipei City Taiwan University (□□□□□□□□).”

Accusing China of using the concert as a “united front” tactic that infringed upon Taiwan’s interests, pro-Taiwan independence groups Free Taiwan Party and 908 Taiwan Republic Campaign first staged a protest outside the venue before purchasing tickets.

Scuffles broke out when they were barred from entering by event staffers as they shouted slogans such as: “This is the land of Taiwanese, why can’t Taiwanese with tickets get in?”

The protesters rammed the entrance at 4pm waving a “Republic of Taiwan” flag, sounding air horns and holding banners that read “Refuse to be China Taiwan University.”

About 30 minutes later, a crowd of NTU students entered the venue, holding placards reading “return the track and field” and tossing joss paper as they demanded an apology from the school and the Cultural Affairs Department.

Citing safety concerns by NTU, the emcee at 4:40pm announced the concert was over, prompting cheers from the student protesters, some of whom climbed onto the stage, shouting: “We are Taiwan National University, not China Taiwan University.”

As the crowd dispersed at about 5pm, verbal altercations erupted between some students and members of pro-unification groups, and three students were injured after being hit by a stick.

Police later found the alleged perpetrator, a 61-year-old man surnamed Hu (□), and took him for questioning.

NTU official later condemned the violence and the event organizer's "belittlement" of the nation's premier university.

NTU secretary-general Lin Ta-te (□□□) said that it was "very inappropriate" for the event organizer to borrow the venue while belittling the university.

Additional reporting by Kuo An-chia

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