

DGFI CAR TORCHING 9 convicted RU students surrender

RU CORRESPONDENT

Nine Rajshahi University (RU) students convicted of torching the vehicle of assistant director of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), during the August 2007 violence, surrendered before a Rajshahi court yesterday.

Rajshahi Metropolitan Magistrate Ruhul Amin ordered them to be sent to jail, around 10:45am after they surrendered before the court. A Rajshahi Speedy Trial Court convicted them of the crime on December 12.

The court had sentenced 10 RU students and the driver of a former RU vice-chancellor Prof Faisul Islam Faruque to three years' rigorous imprisonment each. Ataur Rahman, the driver, is now serving his term in Rajshahi Central Jail.

Abu Sayem, the other convicted student of Bhasha o Sanskriti (Language and Culture) department and the general secretary of Udichi RU unit, was sent to jail Sunday after he surrendered before the same court.

Tight security measures were taken in and around the court yesterday. Law enforcers allowed none except journalists, lawyers and family members of the convicted students inside the court.

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Hundreds of curious people including RU students were waiting outside the court when the convicts left the court in the prison van.

Before their surrender, Bangladesh Chhatra League leader Ayen Uddin, Ujjal and Dip told newsmen that they were innocent.

"We have been victimised by the RU administration and we are surrendering before the court to honour the court's verdict," Ayen said in tears.

"We believe we will be proved innocent in the High Court," Dip told the media.

Ayen Uddin's sister Rehena Parvin, Fakrul's father Khaza Shah Ibrahim and other family members of the convicts claimed the students were not involved in the August 23 violence.

The students who surrendered are Bangladesh Chhatra League RU

unit Secretary Ayen Uddin, Bangladesh Chhatra League RU unit Joint Secretary Aziz Bin Kamal Uzzal, Bangladesh Chhatra League activist Dipayan Sarkar Dip, Mizanur Rahman Mithu, Sardar Ayaz, SM Fakrul Islam Raihan, Shamim Ahmed, Kazi Abdul Latif and Shakhawat Hossain.

Advocate Abdus Salam, Muhammad Ibrahim and Tajul Islam Muhammad Faruk were the legal aides to the convicted students.

Advocate Abdus Salam told The Daily Star that they will appeal to the High Court within January 12.

Students of RU marketing department told newsmen that they will launch peaceful programmes on RU campus from today which include collecting signatures for a memorandum to be sent to the RU vice-chancellor and the chief adviser and forming a

human chain demanding their release.

On August 23, 2007, Rajshahi DGFI Assistant Director Shawkat Ali lodged the case with Motihar Police Station accusing two RU teachers and four students of torching the government-owned vehicle.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case Sub-inspector Mukhtar Hossain submitted the charge sheet accusing 14 people.

Of them, Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan Sajal and Golam Sabbir Sattar Tapu of Geology and Mining Department, and Sadikul Islam, deputy chief information officer of RU Public Relations Office were acquitted.

The convicted students have not yet paid the Tk 5,000 which was fined to each of them. They would have to stay in jail three more months if they fail to pay the fine.