

## 10 RU students, employee freed on President's mercy

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RAJSHAHI, Jan 21.—The 10 Rajshahi University students and the driver of a former RU Vice-chancellor convicted of torching a DGFI vehicle during the last August violence were all released from the jail here on Monday evening on presidential mercy, reports UNB.

They were set free at about 6am, immediate after receipt of the notification on the exoneration.

The convicts were driver of a former RU Vice-chancellor Ataur Rahman Ata and RU Chhatra League secretary Ayenuddin, Dipayan Sarker, Hafiz Uddin Kamal, Shakhawat Hossain, Kazi Abdul Latif, Shamim Ahmed, Abu

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## RU students

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Sayem, Fakrul Islam, Sarker Ayej and Mizanur Rahman Mithu.

On August 22, 2007, a vehicle of the military intelligence outfit DGFI was torched in front of the Vice-chancellor's residence amid violence on the RU campus following Dhaka University's August 20 student unrest.

DGFI assistant director Shawkat Ali filed the case against 14 persons with Motihar police station on August 23.

The plaintiff alleged that a group of unruly students and people assaulted him while he was on duty on the campus on August 22.

Later, on September 1, the investigation officer (IO), sub-inspector Mukhtar Hossain, pressed charges against the 14 suspects.

A court here on December 12 acquitted two Rajshahi University teachers and its one PR officer of the charge of torching the vehicle but handed down three years rigorous imprisonment to 11 other accused persons, 10 of them students.

Dr Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan Sajal and Dr Golam Sabbir Sattar Tapu, both teachers of Geology and Mining Department, and Deputy Chief Information Officer of RU Public Relations Office Sadikul Islam were exonerated from the charge of the arson attack and violation of the emergency rules.

Of the convicts, only driver Ata was in the dock to receive the prison sentence pronounced by the speedy trial court. The rest surrendered to the court on January 7.

Earlier, four teachers of the university were jailed for two years on December 4 in connection with the violence, which flared up in a backlash against the Dhaka University incident and clashes.

But they were released on December 10 after President Professor Dr Iajuddin Ahmed approved their mercy petition, amid strong pleas from different quarters, including teachers and students, for setting them free.