

## Sigh of relief

FROM PAGE 1

He was having problem breathing yesterday amid the festivities, and was stumbling as he tried to walk. Blood was oozing out of his mouth as he was trying to speak.

Sujan however said it felt good to be free. "But I can't talk much, it's very painful for me to talk now," he said in a faint voice with much effort.

Another freed student Liton Mahmud said Shabbag police tortured him, after he had been taken to the police station. He had been arrested by Bhoirob police on September 8 and was handed over to Shabbag police. "Police tortured me and broke the pinky on my left hand. They did not even arrange for my broken finger's treatment. As I managed to get medical attention myself they even took away the medical documents."

Manabendra Dev thanked the entire DU community for the five-month long struggle to free them.

In the morning, a solidarity rally called by DU Teachers' Association (Duta) kicked off at Aparajeyo Bangla, turning the campus into a carnival, which lingered throughout the day and into the evening.

Along with four freed teachers, their colleagues, hundreds of students, families of the freed, civil society members, journalists, and leaders of different professional organisations joined the rally.

Speakers at the rally stressed the need for lifting the state of emergency and the need for an announcement setting a definite date for the stalled 9th parliamentary election as soon as possible.

The rally decided to continue wearing black ribbons and to keep a black flag hoisted atop Arts Building till withdrawal of the army vehicle torching case, release of all detainees of other educational institutions across the country, and withdrawal of all cases in connection with last August's violence on campuses countrywide. A seven-day ultimatum was given to the government from the rally for meeting the demands.

Meanwhile, a trial court of Sylhet acquitted a student of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology of the charges brought against him in a case of violating the state of emergency on the campus during the same period.

Most of the freed students were looking shaky.

"I will go back home tomorrow with my youngest son, whom I got back after so many days of anxious wait," said Moniruzzaman Sardar, the mother Tahmina Begum from Chandpur district, with an ear to ear grin.

Families of the freed teachers and students were watching their dear ones with love and affection in their eyes.

Joyous students were seen treating their peers with sweets at Modhu's canteen, where the control room of the five-month long movement has been, the history of which of being such centres of movements spans over many decades. Students were dousing each other with liquid colours in a sheer show of almost hysterical joy at the freedom of their peers and teachers.

**SOLIDARITY RALLY**  
At the beginning of the solidarity rally at the foot of Aparajeyo Bangla, a sculpture symbolising the people's unvanquished spirit of liberation war, the freed teachers were received by their colleagues, students and admirers in a ceremony.

Prof Anwar Hossain, one of the freed teachers also the general secretary of Duta, said during his detention he always believed that students of the university hand in hand with the rest of the people of the country would rise up to free them. He thanked all students and teachers who had joined the protests last August against an injustice, and struggled through the last few months to get them freed.

"Dhaka University has been the conscience of the country and none can suppress that with might. Whenever the university community saw an injustice or a move against democracy anywhere in the country they protested, and the practice will go on."

The people want democracy, they will not tolerate any other regime in the country, he said.

To the students he said they set an extraordinary example of how peaceful yet powerful demonstrations can also realise a just goal.

"You must stand against any kind of injustice and protest it, but don't be violent, protest peacefully as you have done. Become politically conscious, but don't know to any conspiracy. We will teach politicians how to stay clean."

Prof Harun or Rashid, another freed teacher also the dean of social sciences faculty, asked what offence did the teachers and students commit. They only stood against an injustice, he added.

"Why were we detained for more than three months without any trial? And why were we convicted and then freed? We did not beg for mercy to anyone."

"They freed us only after convicting us thinking they could tarnish the glorious image of the university. But if necessary we will go to jail again still we will not allow anyone to tarnish the image of this institution."

He went on, "We, the students and teachers of the university, are no body will be allowed to repress us with muscle."

Prof Anwar Hossain and Prof Harun or Rashid thanked Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former president of Duta, and Prof MM Akash for their bold roles in the movement to free the teachers and

students.

Addressing the rally, Prof Siddique demanded overturning of the convictions of the teachers and students. "Why should the students bear the stigma of conviction if they are not guilty?" he asked.

"We repeatedly said the students and teachers of the university did not commit any crime. They just protested an injustice, for which they should not be punished," he said.

Idris Ali Sheikh, Abdul Halim Sheikh, Foizuddin Mollah, Shaheen Akter and other guardians of the freed students also spoke at the rally.

Dolly Dev, mother of Manabendra Dev, said her son was born to protest injustice. "He did not commit any crime, but they arrested him from home and tortured him," she said.

Prof Sadrul Amin and Prof Neem Chandra Bhowmik, and two other freed teachers, also spoke.

Prof Shaquazzaman, president over the rally while National Professor Kabir Chowdhury, painter Hashem Khan, poet Syed Shamsul Haq, Prof Muhammad Akhtaruzzaman, Prof Muntasir Mamun, Prof MM Akash, Prof Muhammad Samad, Prof Shahadat Ali, Dr Kamrul Hasan Khan, journalist Iqbal Hossain Chowdhury, sculptor Hamiduzzaman, Prof Saiful Islam Khan, Dr Mesbah Kamal, theatre director also President of Sammilito Sanskritik Jote Nasiruddin Yusuf Bachchu, and many others were present.

The rally put out a call to everyone to observe August 20 as the Day of Repression on Teachers and Students from now on to keep the memory of the struggle alive.

Some DU teachers belonging to pro-BNP and pro-Jamaat White Panel were also seen hanging around the rally, although the panel's teachers had been against any kind of demonstration to free the detainees.

As the rally rolled on to its half-way mark five freed students -- Manabendra Dev, Deen Islam, Deen Islam Angel, Rafiqul Islam Sujan, and Zahidur Rahman Biplab -- joined it arriving from Dhaka Central Jail around 12.15 noon.

Later in the afternoon around 4.45pm, two more students -- Moniruzzaman Sardar and Liton Mahmud arrived on the campus after being freed. And lastly Asaduzzaman Asad got back to the campus after five months from Dhaka Central Jail in the evening.

On their way to the campus, all freed students stopped at Central Shaheed Minar to pay their homage to the language movement martyrs, many of whom were students of DU.

Talking to reporters, the freed students urged the government to withdraw the army vehicle torching case, as five of them are free on bail in connection with that case.

On August 20, a violent student protest broke out on DU campus after some army personnel had beaten three DU students during a soccer match on the university playground. The protest later spread to other educational institutions in the city and elsewhere across the country, continuing for a few days resulting in an imposition of a curfew and shutting down of all educational institutions in all major cities.

Following the imposition of the curfew, the military backed administration launched a crackdown on teachers and students, detaining some of them and filing cases against the spotlighted teachers and students of DU and RU.

Police initially implicated 84,000 unnamed persons in 59 cases filed with different police stations in Dhaka, Rajshahi and other parts of the country.

**West Bengal**  
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districts in West Bengal. It has been confirmed by telephone, said Rahaman. "We have to kill more poultry. The target will be more than two million."

The latest outbreak began in the village of Margram, 240 kilometres from the state capital Kolkata. It is the third and worst in his India since 2000, which has so far not had any human cases of bird flu.

Rahaman however expressed grave concerns about the possibility of the disease spreading to humans, with hundreds of people reporting flu symptoms although tests conducted so far have proved negative.

"Naked children are playing with chickens in courtyards in the affected villages," he said.

"Chickens are roaming in the kitchen while women are cooking. It is a very worrisome situation."

People typically catch bird flu by coming into direct contact with infected poultry. Experts fear a pandemic if the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu mutates into a form easily transmissible between humans.

An AFP correspondent in the bird flu zone said proper isolation procedures were not being followed, as villagers without protective gear milled about health workers carrying out the culling.

The culling teams have been facing an uphill battle with villagers smuggling birds out of affected areas and selling them in markets.

The outbreak, which has seen some 400,000 birds slaughtered so far, is expected to hit local poultry owners hard.

"Most of my chickens have been culled," said Jayanta Bhattacharya, a poultry owner in Rampurhat town near Margram, whose farm here had 30,000 chickens.

"I have already suffered a loss of 400,000 rupees (10,000 dollars)." Sri Lanka on Wednesday banned imports of live birds and chickens from India, G. Wijesiri, a senior official with the country's animal health department, told AFP.

## Bird flu

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the incidents of bird flu infection at Rajbari, Katapara and Razartampur areas were confirmed by Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute at Savar in Dhaka.

The infected poultry in the area has already been culled after the confirmation, the officials added.

At least 600 fowls in three poultry farms of the district died of the flu in the last 15 days, said Debashish Bhattacharya, the district livestock official.

AM Saiful Hasan, DC of Dinajpur, said the poultry industry in the district is vulnerable to the deadly virus attack as the flu-affected areas in India share a long stretch of border with Bangladesh.

M E m d a d u l H a q u e Chowdhury, a veterinary surgeon at Bangladesh Agriculture University, said, all bordering districts, especially Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Joypurhat, Nilphamari and Chapainawabganj are at risk of flu attack.

On the day of the incident, at around 11am, Afzal was waiting outside RU Medical Centre after carrying an injured student there on his rickshaw.

Eyewitnesses and newspaper reports say he received bullets when riot-gear police entered the campus firing shots and moved towards the gymnasium attacked by angry students.

Afzal was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in an ambulance but succumbed to his injuries on the way. He was refused admission and his returned to RU medical centre.

Later students paraded his body in protest of the police atrocity. Rajshahi Metropolitan Police in a press release that evening claimed that Afzal died of beating by unruly students.

The same night, sub-inspector SM Faruk Hossain of Mothar police station lodged a case against some Residents of Amanatganj and Alekanda areas under Barisal city and Puran Bazar, Akhbari areas of Patuakhali town reported the deaths of the crows.

Manjur-E-Ilahi, DC of Barisal, Jaimuddin Molla, district livestock officer, Dr Sunil Chandra Gayen, principal scientific officer of the regional live stock research centre and laboratory in Barisal, and Abu Taher, district livestock officer of Patuakhali, acknowledged the incidents of crow deaths.

Dr Sunil Chandra Gayen, scientific officer of livestock laboratory in Barisal, urged all to report bird deaths to the lab and send in the carcasses for clinical examination.

More than eight thousand fowls were culled last week in Barisal, Barguna and Patuakhali districts after detecting bird flu, sources said.

**Sudden dip**  
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cold diarrhoea and died, though they were given proper treatment.

Sources of the civil surgeon office said, a total of 397 patients suffering from cold-related diseases were hospitalised in seven upazila health complexes and two hospitals in last 24 hours.

Thousands of the low-income families faced untold sufferings due to freezing cold intensified by drizzles yesterday.

Our Dinajpur correspondent reports that the people of Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and Joypurhat are experiencing biting cold spell for the first time in the season along with rain.

According to the Dinajpur weather official sources, these four districts of the northern region are the worst affected by the waves of chilling cold blowing from the Himalayan ranges.

The met office recorded 20 millimetres of rainfall in those areas yesterday from dawn to dusk.

Our Sirajganj correspondent says: The farmers faced extreme difficulties ploughing their fields during the peak season of Boro cultivation following the severe cold yesterday.

Attendance of people at different offices and businesses in the district town was also very thin.

While visiting different embankments of Jamuna river, The Daily Star found the people left homeless by river erosion and floods as the worst sufferers of the chilling weather.

In addition, cold related diseases like cold diarrhoea, pneumonia, dysentery, cough and fever are spreading out among the people in the remote areas.

Hospital sources said that on an average, 15 people are being hospitalised every day with cold related diseases. Most of them are children and elderly people, they added.

Sirajganj civil surgeon office sources said that about 200 people, including children and elderly people, in nine upazilas of the district have been admitted to different hospitals and upazila health complexes in the last two days.

UNB reports: Pneumonia that broke out in an alarming proportion in the district has affected around 2,500 children during the last three weeks as the cold wave prevails.

Sources said the children mostly from poor families have been admitted to the district general hospital and other upazila health complexes and many of them are suffering from acute respiratory problems.

## Rickshawpuller

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Jaldhaka upazila in Nilphamari district in dire poverty.

Choking on her tears, his 25 year old wife Asma said, "I heard many teachers were punished (for violating emergency rules) and later released from jail, what about the murder of my poor husband? He was a good man."

Afzal's 60-year old mother Siratunnesa demanded justice for her son's death. She said that they were living on next to nothing since Afzal's death. Asma had to send two of her children to live with her mother, as she is too poor to keep them herself.

Afzal used to ply rickshaw no.15 of Rabi's Garage at Hadi Crossing in Rajshahi city.

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The same night, sub-inspector SM Faruk Hossain of Mothar police station lodged a case against some

2500 unnamed students for the murder and violent activities on RU campus.

However, Afzal's autopsy report said his death was caused by shock and haemorrhage following the shot on his head. Following the report, the investigation officer (IO) of the case sub inspector Rajab Ali on October 20 pressed charges against 10 students for violent activities but dropped all reference of Afzal's killing from the case.

In the final report, the IO said no witness or evidence was found to identify Afzal's killers to press charge against. He added that if any witnesses were found regarding Afzal's death, police would take up the matter.

Police and prosecution witnesses during trial of a case over RU unrest told courts that students used bricks and wooden weapons during violence and none of them were seen using any firearms.

In total four cases filed over RU campus unrest, eight teachers were arrested, taken on remand. The court later acquitted four teachers.

Meanwhile the government on Monday has asked local authorities in Rajshahi to drop the case filed by SI SM Faruk Hossain against students.

**Production**  
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factories and four other garment units in the area were shut down.

Informed, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. Contacted, the authorities of Metro Garments said that the six workers had resigned from their jobs.

## 28th BCS exam

FROM PAGE 1

2005 sought applications for 1,776 posts, the 26th special BCS examinations dated August 29, 2004 asked for 1,034 posts of lecturer, and the circular for the 25th BCS examinations published on February 28, 2004 sought applications for 1,524 posts.

"I will not be able to apply for the 28th BCS exams as I have crossed the age limit. I would be able to apply for at least two BCS exams if the PSC had issued one Dhaka each year," Anwar Hossain, a former DU student who is now 31, told The Daily Star.

The jobseekers were also disappointed hearing the news that the quota to be held under the new BCS recruitment rule.

According to the new rule, pass course graduates are not eligible for the competitive exams, marks will be deducted in the preliminary test for wrong answers, candidates must obtain 50 percent marks on an average in the written tests, and editors of national dailies may be included in the viva voce committees.

However, while the 28th BCS boasts of these changes, it retains the 55 percent non-merit quota, which has long been considered a bar to recruiting meritorious officers in the civil service.

Under this quota system, only 45 percent public servants are selected on merit. The rest in both the cadre and non-cadre services include 30 percent freedom fighters or their offspring, 10 percent women, 10 percent under districts quotas and five percent indigenous people.

The circular for the 28th BCS examinations sought applications for 1,720 posts in 14 general and 13 technical-professional cadres.

Candidates can collect the application forms from the branches of Sonali Bank from March 3 and will have to submit them by May 15.

## Labaid Hospital

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press conference at National Press Club yesterday.

Other family members complained about 'wrong treatment and misbehaviour of the Labaid authorities and said they are making money through holding patients as hostages.

Mushfique Ahmed has brought the issue to court. Advocate Idris of Bhola was admitted to Labaid Cardiac Hospital on May 8 last year and had an angiogram there. He, however, developed breathing difficulties as soon as he was taken to coronary care unit (CCU). He died at 3:00pm at the angiogram room. Though the relatives made repeated enquiries about the patient, doctors informed them of his death at 11:00pm.

The body had shown all signs of rigour mortise by that time. Still, the authorities did not hand it over to the relatives until hospital bills were paid.

The relatives said they collected the compact disk (CD) of angioplasty and showed it to other experts who said the attending doctors at Labaid injured the patient's blood vessels while trying to insert a ring there, resulting in blood clotting around his heart.

"Attracted by Labaid's glossy advertisements in newspapers, I got admitted to Labaid Hospital after valve replacement in my heart. After an echocardiogram, they told me I had had a cardiac arrest and that all the valves of my heart had blockades even though I did not have any chest pain or respiratory problems," said Enayet Hossain Dulal at the press conference.

He said he consulted another cardiologist who told him that he did not suffer any cardiac arrest and that none of his valves were blocked. "The doctor just gave me a simple medicine," Dulal said, who is now living a healthy life.

It was alleged at the press conference that the hospital authorities took advance money from a patient

for angiogram, only to tell him later that he need not go through it.

"My father's death certificate said he had tuberculosis, but they did not hand in the papers despite our repeated requests. They also misbehaved themselves," said Anwar Parvez.

He complained that his elder brother, who is a teacher at North South University, was slapped in the face by a security guard on order from the hospital's general manager Imran Chowdhury because the academic protested at the presence of a huge crowd at the coronary care unit.

Imran Chowdhury, however, denied the allegation, saying no such incident occurred at the hospital.

"The allegations of keeping patients as hostages are also untrue because Labaid is the only private-sector hospital that takes patients without any deposit," Imran said, adding that many patients still owe the hospital treatment bills.

Denying the complaints about wrong treatment, he said accident may occur everywhere, anytime. He said if the patients think they have been subject to wrong treatment, they could seek legal recourse.

The speakers at the press conference said though Labaid has been continuing 'deception' and many newspapers have published reports for it, no action has been taken against the hospital.

They called on the caretaker government to take necessary steps against such hospitals and their physicians.

Dr Mehnaz Ahmed, head of geriatric department at New York City's Brookline Hospital, Iqbal Hossain, Towfiq Mahmud, Shaiful Islam and Tanvir Imam, among others, were present at the press conference.

They said they either lost family members or had to incur financial losses at Labaid Hospital.

## Shishu Hospital

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deferred for being incomplete," he adds.

Only one anaesthetist comes to assist the surgeon twice a week. Besides, absence of burn management system and road accident injury service forces patients seek treatment elsewhere.

"We cannot even think of admitting patients with major injuries as that would require three surgeons in three shifts. But I'm the only surgeon here who get the anaesthetist twice a week for conducting major operations," Dr ASM Alamgir Chowdhury, consultant (paediatric surgery) tells The Daily Star.

The only ambulance with emergency patients finds it hard to enter the hospital through a narrow lane.

"Even truckers with medicines don't want to come near the hospital on this road that is mostly grabbed by locals. We have to face tremendous problems to bring medicines by vans from where the trucks stop," says an insider.

"We have applied to the city corporation to evict the road grabbers. But the file has been lying there for at least six months," says Dr Nurul Islam.

During a visit to the hospital, a long queue of outdoor patients was seen waiting in the hospital yard.

"We take medicines from here free of cost. Normally they supply oral saline and paracetamol group tablets," said Maryam who came with her daughter from Islambagh.

The hospital director reiterates that they provide the patients with 90 percent medicines free of cost as per rules. But guardians say they often have to buy medicines from outside.

"My son was admitted yesterday evening and it's now 12:30pm. The hospital supplied only cholera saline and I had to buy medicines and injections," said a mother who brought his son suffering from severe diarrhoea.

However, the number of patients receiving treatment is increasing against all odds. Last year about 50,000 patients received treatment here, while the number was 41,000 and 27,000 in 2006 and 2005 respectively.

"If we can develop our service with adequate medical equipment and manpower, the hospital will play an important role to ensure health service to the children of the city," the director hopes.

## RU teachers

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convicted for protesting injustice. Although they were relieved of punishment through clemency, they had been branded as criminals, he said.

"We think the conviction against the university teachers and students will not solve the crisis, rather it will intensify if they are not acquitted from the charges" they said adding that the conviction will create scopes for harassment.

The teachers said they fear the convicted students might face difficulties in getting government jobs and other facilities in future.

## India offers

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prevention, mitigation and preparedness to cut the risks of natural and man-made disasters.

Indian experts at the meeting pointed out how remote sensing images taken even by commercial satellites clearly captured the effects of cyclone Sidr which flattened the southern region of Bangladesh last year, the tsunami along India's east-coast in 2004 and the earthquake in Kashmir in 2005.

India has over half a dozen remote-sensing satellites in orbit, covering the entire Saarc region.

The aim of the meeting was to geoinformatics in risk mapping, risk assessment and risk monitoring under diverse geographical, socio-economic and cultural settings.

Since satellite-imaging of the Saarc region has security implications for member countries, it would be discussed with each member country, the sources said.

Pointing out that South Asia is prone to earthquakes, Shivraj Patil emphasised the need for sustained scientific research on quakes, particularly in the Himalayan region, in order to locate precisely the fault zones and the return of tremors.

## Five to die

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ents of 35 prosecution witnesses during the trial.

According to the prosecution, miscreants led by Sheuli kidnapped Turya on October 29, 2006 to get ransom from his family.

Turya's father Jagannath Ghosh filed an abduction case with Uttara Police Station against Sheuli and four others on November 7 the same year.

Later, Rab members on December 11 recovered Turya's mutilated body dumped in a low-lying area at Rampura.

## Gaza border

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Condoleezza Rice said Washington wants both Israeli security concerns and Palestinian humanitarian needs to be met.

"We are very concerned... that both the security concerns of Israel and the humanitarian concerns of the Gazans be met," she said at a news conference in Zurich en route to the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Israel, which has long complained that Egypt is not doing enough to control the already porous border, called on Cairo to do more.

"We are worried, as these breaches not only permit Palestinians to leave the Gaza Strip, but also permit Hamas to easily infiltrate arms and terrorists from Egypt," foreign ministry spokesman Arye Mekel told AFP.

"We are hoping the Egyptians will resolve the problem," said a foreign ministry statement.

But rivals Fatah and Hamas blamed Israel, calling the break-out an inevitable consequence of the blockade.

"Israel is responsible for what has happened -- this is the consequence of the blockade imposed on Gaza," Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina told AFP.