

#NOVATONEDUCATION



PHOTO: ADNAN MS FAKIR

OPTING FOR NON-VIOLENCE

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PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

The four-day long blockade against VAT on education finally came to an end last week, when the government withdrew its earlier decision to charge a 7.5 percent vat on private universities. Students from private universities all over the country became one to fight the otherwise insensible and nonsensical move that was going to be taken by the authorities.

The *Star Weekend* has been with the movement, following the progression right from the beginning till the end. The *Star Weekend* facebook page has been updating news, photographs and videos of the protest right from the heart of the capital continuously for the four days that the students had taken over the streets.

The protest was a unique one. Not only were the student protests non-violent, but they also managed to 'be-friend' the law enforcers with flowers and mishti (sweetmeats) -- this was indeed a history in the making. In a country where student protests have always been synonymous to demolishing vehicles, public property and causing major harm to the common people, this protest was indeed of a different and of course, a positive nature. In some ways, the private university protest was of a Gandhian nature, promoting peace and structure.

Yet another exclusive element that could not go unnoticed was the excellent slogans and statements displayed on placards and posters. Starting from hilarious Bangla film dialogues to outbursts of courage – their young penmanship never failed to impress or inspire.

The protest had also become a platform for street plays, music, cartoons and caricatures for the young and talented students – using all forms of expression to put their point across.

If given the opportunity to perform and showcase success, the private university students have shown the country and the world that victory can be attained through voice, art forms and non-violence in a society, otherwise, infamous for frequent violent riots on streets and student politics. ■

