

JU students face accommodation problems

EMRAN HOSSAIN EMON,
JU Correspondent

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About half of the students enrolled in the current academic session at Jahangirnagar University (JU) have been compelled to stay on the floors of the dormitories while the rest are living outside the campus due to acute accommodation problems.

The dormitories remain occupied due to session jam that delays the graduation of existing students. The 29th batch students were supposed to leave the dormitories on completion of their study by November last year but they are still staying.

The country's lone "residential university" is now gripped by two years of session jam. Political instability, repeated movements by teachers and students and class abstention programmes by teachers over the last few years have caused the session jam.

Moreover, some students of the 28th batch are yet to complete their masters, especially in Economics and Pharmacy departments.

Teachers and students believe the crisis might not have arisen had if the university authorities handled the academic activities efficiently.

Lack of firmness of the university authorities to resolve the crisis, unplanned admission of students, illegal seat occupation by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders for distribution on the basis of political identity and failure of university authorities in distributing seats have worsened the

accommodation crisis at different dormitories.

The delay in construction of the new female dormitory named Khaleda Zia Hall has made the sufferings unbearable to the female students as most of the students of 2003-2004 academic session could not manage seats till date.

The university authorities were compelled to manage special accommodation arrangements for them in a newly constructed teachers' quarter opposite the Jahanara Imam hall that housed about 220 female students.

Though the under construction dormitory was scheduled to complete six months ago, the construction firm said it would be completed by September this year.

"About 8 to 10 students are living in a small room while 28/30 students are using one toilet," said Mahfuza Sharmin Shila, a newcomer of Philosophy department now residing at the makeshift teachers' quarters.

"We feel insecure here as no fence has been made. The authorities must make special arrangements immediately for our security," said Sabera Tabassum, another inmate.

"Some students attached with Pritilota, Fazilatun Nesa (FN), Jahanara Imam (JI) and Faizunnesa hall are living at the quarter under the supervision of the four hall provosts for temporary period," said prof Nasir Uddin, provost of JI hall.

A total of 100 students have been allotted seats in Al-Beruni Hall against only 12 vacant seats. About 15 students managed space on the floor of the hall's paper room.

About 556 students got allotment in Moulana Bhasani, Kamal Uddin, Shahid Salam Barkat and Meer Musharraf Hossain halls where they are staying in common rooms, students union offices, reading rooms and guest rooms in an unhygienic atmosphere.

Some eight to 12 students are staying in each of the four seated rooms.

About 170 students were allotted seats in the newly constructed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Hall against only 20 vacant seats.

Some female students are also staying on the floors of the common rooms, TV rooms reading room of Pritilota, Fazilatun Nesa (FN), Jahanara Imam (JI) and Faizunnesa halls.

Many newly enrolled students are forced to live outside the campus due to the accommodation problem. The university authorities have arranged special bus services for the newcomers living outside the campus though the arrangement is insufficient.

"We have taken all possible steps to ease the sufferings of the students. We have asked the construction firm to complete the construction of the new female dormitory at the earliest possible time. We have also completed all preparations to erect fence around the teachers' quarter where female students are staying," said Vice chancellor Prof Mustahidur Rahman.

Established in 1971, the JU has about 7,500 students now, including about 2,500 female students, while its capacity of accommodation is 4,984.



Students of Jahangirnagar University prepare to sleep on makeshift beds on the dormitory floor.

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