

## DU freshers facing acute accommodation crisis

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Over 3000 freshers of Dhaka University (DU) are facing serious accommodation crisis as they find it very difficult to get a place in the residential dormitories.

The academic activities of 2006-07 session have begun over two months ago, but many students still cannot manage to have a seat in their respective dormitories, which are crammed with students of previous sessions.

Students coming from outside the capital are bearing the brunt of the accommodation crisis.

"When I asked the hall authorities for a place in the hall, they said that freshers are not allowed to stay in the hall. But where I will live now as I've no place to live in the capital," said a student who came from Khulna and is attached to Ziaur Rahman hall. At present, he is living in the house of one of his relatives.

Taslima Akter from Ihenidah, who has been attached to Rokeya Hall, has tried for the last two months to get or share a room at the hall. She has applied to the hall authorities and also sought the help of senior residents, but to no avail.

"Now I wonder how long I would be able to stay in the house of my distant relatives," she said.

In previous years, student leaders used to provide accommodation for freshers by cramming them into a number of rooms known as 'Gono rooms' in every dormitory, where

they live in an unhygienic condition.

Mainly the student organisations of the ruling parties managed accommodation for the freshers so that they can be used in the political activities on the campus.

But this year, with the change in political scenario, the freshers have failed to get such facilities.

Although the rules and regulations of the university do not allow too many students to live in a room, the student organisations made it a common practice for many years to cram freshers into a room while the hall authorities remained indifferent.

The university administration is now trying to comply with the rules that bar freshers from cramming into the rooms in dormitories.

The university authorities said they are now struggling to accommodate senior students in the dormitories.

"We are sympathetic to the problems of freshers, but we don't want our students to cram into rooms in an unhygienic condition. We also can't do anything to address their problems at the moment," a provost of a dormitory said, preferring anonymity.

Former vice-chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury told The Daily Star that the university authorities could not construct new halls due to lack of space. The authorities, however, are going to build a female hall near the Curzon Hall to ease the accommodation crisis, he added.

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