



1. Habibur Rahman Hall, where some police families now live.



2. Gulshanara City, owned by Haji Selim, occupies a part of Tibet Hall.



3. A family claiming to be of a Liberation War martyr has taken over Shaheed Azmal Hossain Hall.



4. The old Crown Bhaban now Crown Market.



5. A high-rise building stands on the land belonging to Shaheed Shahab Uddin Hall.



6. The now-defunct Dhaka city corporation set up Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman School on the land of Bazlur Rahman Hall in 2006.



7. Corrugated iron-sheet structures occupy the land where Saidur Rahman and Abdur Rouf Majumder halls had been.



8. A part of the Shaheed Nazrul Islam Hall is now an orphanage and a madrasa.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

INDIAN DETENTION CENTRE 11 Bangladeshis to be sent back home soon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Eleven Bangladeshis, including two minors, who are currently in a detention centre in Assam state of India, will be deported to Bangladesh soon, a senior state administration official said yesterday.

The Bangladesh government agreed to take back its nine nationals from Silchar detention centre. They will be sent back after the state government gives its final clearance for the deportation, Cachar Deputy Commissioner S Viswanathan said.

The issue of deporting inmates staying in Indian detention centres was discussed at length during the deputy commissioners/magistrates' meeting last year at Moulvibazar in Bangladesh. A list of detainees was then handed to the deputy commissioners of Sylhet and Moulvibazar.

Upon verification of the nine detainees' nationality, Bangladesh agreed to accept them who include two minor children of one Arati Das, Viswanathan told PTI in Silchar.

"With this initial step, we are confident that the rest of the detainees will also be deported. Though the process is slow we are happy that the issue is being sorted out," he said.

Meanwhile, more than one kg of suspected heroin was seized yesterday in Lalgola area of Murshidabad district when an unknown person was trying to smuggle it into Bangladesh from India, according to the Indian Border Security Force.

The BSF had received specific information about the movement of smugglers along with a consignment of narcotics near the border area under Lalgola Police Station.

A search team was observing the movement along the Indo-Bangla border when it noticed a person trying to throw a bag over the international border fence, the BSF said in a statement. Border security members then challenged the person but he managed to disappear into the dark.

Searching the area, law enforcers found a polythene bag containing 13 small plastic packets with 1,300 grams in total of brown colour powder suspected to be heroin. The items have been handed over to Lalgola police for further scrutiny, according to the statement.

The strange case of JnU

FROM PAGE 1

how the government plans to give us a place to live," Kishor Kumar Sarkar of the zoology department told The Daily Star last Thursday on the JnU campus.

Founded as Dhaka Brahma School in 1858 and renamed Jagannath School in 1872, the 158-year-old institution was taken over by the then Pakistan government in 1968. It opened graduate and post-graduate programmes in 1975 and was approved as a full-fledged public university during the BNP government rule in 2005.

Eleven years on, it remains the only public university out of the 37 in the country that has no student dormitories. There are no quarters for some 600 teachers and about 500 officials and employees either.

That's strange because one of the main features of a public university is that it is residential. Also, the Jagannath University Act 2005 under which the JnU was established as a public university makes it clear that it is a residential university.

WHAT'S WRONG? Students allege they still have no dormitories because the university authorities and the government are indifferent to their sufferings.

Over the years, the authorities have managed to reclaim some land from grabbers following street agitations by students. Also, the university has its own land in Keraniganj. But the authorities have yet to build a single hall on any of the land.

Currently, some 20,000 students study here. Most of them live in hostels and messes, some miles away from the campus, at an average cost of Tk 5,000 to 6,000 a month. That's in addition to their fees and transport costs.

This is extremely expensive, given the majority of the students come from lower or lower-middle class families from across the country, students and teachers said.

Assistant Prof Chowdhury Shahid Kader said for the first five years after JnU became a public university, no one even thought about the hall problem. Everybody was busy restructuring the administration and recruiting teachers.

"But two main problems are reluctance of the administration and financial discrimination by the government," he said.

"That's true, at least partly. But we are trying," said Proctor Nur Mohammad.

According to him, the reclaimed land areas of the old halls are too small to build dormitories. Also, the district administration has leased out the land to the JnU for only a few years. Under Rajuk law, construction projects cannot normally be undertaken if the lease period is below 99 years.

But Shahid Kader, who teaches history, said if the VC used the influence of his office and sat with the government and Rajuk authorities, this particular rule could be worked around considering the sufferings of the students.

Contacted last night, VC Prof Mijanur Rahman said, "The media and some people talk about 12 halls. But the fact is we have no halls, we never had any halls."

He called upon all to come out of this misconception.

"Jagannath University is a public university. We need land. It is for the government to decide where that will be ... Tell me: Can it be the job of the students and teachers to reclaim land and halls?"

PROTESTS The JnU students are no strangers to street programmes for halls.

They boycotted classes and exams to take to the streets in 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2014. But this year is different.

Students always face difficulties in renting living spaces as house owners do not want to take in bachelors. But after the July 1 Gulshan terror attack, the problem deepened.

Many students, including those from the JnU, have been asked to vacate their messes immediately. Some JnU students are now staying with friends in Dhaka University halls, after being driven out by their house owners.

The ongoing protest, which began on August 1, came against this backdrop.

In the past, whenever they launched a demonstration for halls, the authorities would say there is no land to build dormitories in that part of the town; it's dense.

But now that Dhaka Central Jail has been relocated from Old Dhaka to Keraniganj, students are saying that the government can give them the land to build halls.

Two years before the students' call, the VC wrote to the home ministry on March 23, 2014, requesting that the ministry hand over the prison land to the university so it could set up some halls there. He wrote again on August 11 this year to that effect.

The ministry has yet to respond to either of the letters, said Engineer Md Ohiduzzaman, registrar of the university.

Apart from residential halls and research centres, the university proposes to build five museums -- one named after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and four named after the four national leaders who were killed in that jail in November 1975.

THE CURRENT STATUS Even as students suffered from accommodation crisis, most of the erstwhile Jagannath College halls continued to change hands. Over the years, their "owners" have fully or partially changed the original structures and turned them into multi-storey apartments, shopping malls, schools and madrasas.

In the face of severe accommodation crisis faced by female students, the authorities in October 2013 undertook a project to build a 20-storey hall for them opposite the campus.

The 36-month project was supposed to complete in October this year, but in the past 34 months, only the basement has been completed.

Meanwhile, the authorities last year sent a proposal to the UGC for building a 20-storey dormitory for the male students on the 25-bigha land in Keraniganj. They are now waiting for the government's approval for the Tk 275-crore project.

Several teachers and officials said the main problem facing the JnU is that its campus is too small (about seven acre; DU has 321 acres) for a public university. If the government allocated them a bigger piece of land in Keraniganj, for example, they could shift the campus there.

However, there are others who are against this view. According to them, the hall problem can be solved without shifting the campus.

THE LOST HOME The university authorities say the Jagannath College administration took over some properties in different parts of the old town, after their Hindu owners abandoned those in 1965. The College then started to use those as

dormitories.

But between February 6 and 10 in 1985, people in different parts of the old town launched a series of systematic attacks on the halls and drove out the students. No one died, but many from both sides were injured, according to locals who were among those who evicted the students.

"The Chhatra Samaj [the pro-Prshad student body] men would harass local girls, buy food on credit and never pay, extort money from businessmen and do drug business, day after day," an elderly person at Malitola told The Daily Star during the 2014 students' protest.

The row began in Mughaltuli (now Malitola), where Bazlur Rahman Hall had been. Powerful locals ousted the students of this hall first and those of the other halls within the next four days.

The halls were then grabbed one by one and have been sold and resold for crores of taka.

In 2007, two years after it was made a university, the JnU hired an audit firm to locate its properties. The firm, Masih Muhith Haque & Co Consortium, in its report suggested that the university initiate moves to reclaim possession of six dormitories -- Shaheed Anwar Shafique Hall, Shaheed Azmal Hossain Hall, Bani Bhaban, Shaheed Shahab Uddin Hall, Tibet Hall and Abdur Rahman Hall.

About the other halls, the firm said it would be "unwise" to move to restore ownership of those on various grounds such as they were declared khash land or were being used for educational purposes.

Since then, the land of three halls -- Habibur Rahman Hall, a part of Shaheed Nazrul Islam Hall and Bani Bhaban -- and an open field have been reclaimed, while the others remain occupied.

The current "owners", including Dhaka-7 lawmaker Haji Mohammad Selim who built a multi-storey market on the land of Tibet Hall opposite the Ahsan Manjil, maintain that these are their land.

But they cannot explain how they can own vested properties -- properties abandoned by Hindus, and under the law, only the actual owner can get back such properties on submission of valid documents.

'DISCRIMINATION' Because the halls are on vested prop-

erties, the college and the university authorities had no papers and it was hard to prove the claim of their ownership, though it was a piece of cake for the grabbers.

Several cases and counter cases are now pending before courts in this regard.

The legal battles apart, the JnU faced discrimination in terms of budget allocation from the beginning.

Other than the Tk 100-crore sanctioned six years ago to build the 20-storey hall for the girls and an academic building on the campus, development budget for the university is zero, said Ohiduzzaman, the registrar.

"We have no land and no fund to build halls. This is a key reason why we could not build halls on the reclaimed land. But now that we purchased some land in Keraniganj, we can build some halls there if we get funds," he said.

Dr Kazi Saifuddin, president of JnU Teachers Association, agrees, with frustration. "Not only halls," he said, "because of this financial discrimination, we cannot offer many other facilities to our students."

"It [the protest] is hampering their education. It is a loss for the country. Who knows, there might be an accident!" he said, and called on the education minister to sit with the teachers to find a way out.

Asked, UGC Chairman Prof Abdul Mannan said, "Definitely there should be halls, and the students' demand is logical. But where and how the halls will be built must be decided at the policy level."

On the allegation of financial discrimination against JnU, he said the term "discrimination" is relative and rather sweeping. "The budget for one university must not be compared with another, because the cost and other realities of one university are different from another."

But what can the UGC, as the regulatory body, do to solve the accommodation problem?

"If the university authorities send us a project proposal and if we find it logical, we will send it for the government's nod," he said.

That's a long shot. For now, the students want to hear from the PM before they return to their classes where they belong.

[Rafiqul Islam contributed to this story.]

Quasem waits for 'picked-up' son to return

FROM PAGE 1

Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Syed Iftekhar Uddin, however, said the 63-year-old convict would get a "reasonable time" to decide and the time would not be more than seven days.

Earlier in the day, Quasem, considered a top financier of Jamaat, sought time to decide on filing a petition for presidential clemency, the last option to avoid the gallows.

Prasanta Kumar Banik, senior jail superintendent of Kashimpur Jail, said that around 7:30am yesterday they read out to Quasem the full verdict of the Supreme Court that dismissed his petition for reviewing its judgment, upholding his death penalty for committing crimes against humanity in 1971.

When the jail authorities asked him whether he would seek presidential clemency, Quasem sought time to think, he said, adding that the jail authorities received the copy of the verdict around 12:45am yesterday.

from his Mirpur DOHS home in the capital on the night of August 9 and he has been traceless since then.

Asked about the allegation of the sons of three war criminals being picked up by plainclothes men, Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque at a press conference at Police Headquarters yesterday said if anyone had gone missing and complaints were lodged in that regard, police would try their best to find them.

FAMILY MEETS QUASEM Nine members of Quasem's family, including his wife and two daughters, entered the jail around 2:30pm and stayed there for an hour, reports our Gazipur correspondent, citing the senior jail superintendent.

Coming out of the jail, Ayesha Khatun talked to reporters.

"My son is also one of the lawyers in the case. Without consulting him, I cannot make any decision whether I would submit mercy petition or not," Ayesha quoted her husband as saying.

Ahmed Bin Quasem was allegedly picked up by some unidentified men

and taken to Mirpur DOHS home in the capital on the night of August 9 and he has been traceless since then.

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WHAT IG (PRISONS) SAYS? Syed Iftekhar Uddin held a press briefing at prisons' headquarters around 4:00pm yesterday.

Replying to a question, he said Quasem would be given a reasonable time, which may be a maximum of seven days.

About the place of execution, the prisons chief said, "He [Quasem] is now in Kashimpur Central Jail and

we'll consult with all stakeholders and decide on the place of execution."

Earlier, five war criminals were executed at Dhaka Central Jail which has been shifted recently to Keraniganj from the old part of the city.

About their preparation for the execution, the IG prisons said, "The prisons authorities are always ready to perform their duties. So there is no need to take preparation separately for it [execution]."

He said family members of a convict usually meet the convict after dismissal of review petition and that the meeting between Quasem and his family member was a usual one. The family would get the chance to meet him for the last time before execution, if he does not seek clemency or the president rejects his plea, Iftekhar added.

HARTAL The country yesterday witnessed another lax hartal enforced by Jamaat for what it claimed the government's conspiracy to kill Quasem.

The hartal passed peacefully and there was no report of any untoward incident in Dhaka or other parts of the country. No picketing or flash procession was reported, reported our correspondents.

Traffic was normal on all major thoroughfares and streets in the capital. Commuters were seen going to work and business.

Police early yesterday arrested at least six Jamaat men from Sylhet, Satkhira and Sherpur for allegedly planning subversive activities during hartal.

BACKGROUND The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed Quasem's petition for reviewing its judgment that upheld his death penalty for committing crimes against humanity in 1971. The apex court released the full verdict and sent it to the International Crimes Tribunal around 6:00pm.

The ICT then sent the copies of the verdict to Dhaka Central Jail, the office of Dhaka district magistrate and

law and home ministries. Quasem, the chief of ruthless militia Al-Badr in Chittagong, set up a torture camp at Mahamaya Dalim Hotel in the port city and masterminded brutal torture and killings of many freedom-loving people.

The ICT-2 gave him the death penalty on two charges and different jail terms on eight other charges. He challenged the verdict at the apex court.

On March 8 this year, the SC upheld his death sentence on one charge -- the killing of young freedom fighter Jasim Uddin at Dalim Hotel -- and jail terms on six other charges for his involvement in abduction, confinement and torture of freedom fighters and innocent people.

It, however, acquitted him of the other three charges, including a murder charge on which he was sentenced to death by the ICT-2.

Quasem filed a petition seeking review of his convictions and sentences on June 19.