



PHOTO: MD. RAHAT KABIR

Do girls still need a curfew?

Dhaka University thinks they do.

AANILA KISHWAR TARANNUM

Raisa is a final year student at Dhaka University's (DU) science faculty. She lives in Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall, where the gates close at 9.30pm sharp. While her classes end at around 5.30pm, she has to do three tuitions to sustain herself financially. On nights when she has to teach, she finds herself panicking over returning to the hall on time; she knows that even if she's only five minutes late because of traffic, she'll have trouble getting inside.

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Jinia graduated a few years ago and is currently pursuing higher education in the United States. She used to participate in many extra-curricular activities and workshops for which she had to stay out till after 9.30pm. The only reason she didn't have to sacrifice her work was because she had a permanent home in Uttara. She simply went back home instead to her room at Shamsunnahar Hall on nights when she had to stay out late. Unlike Swarna, who told me, "I think I would be able to enjoy my time at DU and participate in more ECAs if I didn't have to worry about getting back by 9.30 every night. There are a lot of events and concerts held at DU and around town which I can't attend." Swarna is a student of Fine Arts, and her department is famous for organising some of the biggest events in DU. The students have to stay out on campus till late to work on their projects, but Swarna often misses out because if she doesn't abide by the curfew, she won't have a place to stay

that night. "It's funny that they give us the excuse that all of this is just for our 'safety', but if I am out in my own campus at 10, am I not safe? Shouldn't it be on the authorities to ensure that not only our halls but the whole campus is safe?"

Every hall has "late permits" available which allow the girls to enter after 9.30pm—but this a farce, claim students, because they only really allow entry until 10. The provosts of Ruqayyah Hall and Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall say that they are more than willing to give out late permits if the students have a valid excuse (that being departmental excursions, or picnics—not external events) for it. But most of the girls find the process of obtaining a late permit to be a hassle. Sharmin, a resident of Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall, talks about a recent incident she had to face, "A few days ago I was called to attend a seminar outside Dhaka.

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ARE BEING BUILT WITH HIGHLY DUCTILE GRADE 420
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