

Roofs of two old DU dormitories may collapse any time

Varsity Correspondent

Residents of Dhaka University's two old dormitories fear roof collapse any time as the university family on Tuesday observed 17 years of Jagannath Hall tragedy that claimed 39 lives in 1985.

The roof of the risky Old Assembly Building, yet used as television room, collapsed on the huge number of students then watching a popular drama on the night of October 15, 1985. Dhaka University teachers, students, officials and employees observe the day as University Mourning Day every year.

Even 17 years after the Jagannath Hall tragedy, the pitiful conditions of roofs of two building of Surya Sen Hall and Fazlul Huq Hall now haunt the residents, whether a likely collapse would cause a disaster.

Roof of the terrace in front of Surya Sen Hall auditorium may collapse anytime. Engineers of the university said several months back. And the hall authorities removed the tea-stalls from there following the caution. But scores of students still sit there and gossip during leisure times.

When the students were going to attend Tuesday's commemorative programmes in memory of the victims of Jagannath Hall tragedy, many

of them pointed to the roof and expressed their apprehension.

"The authorities are now observing just one mourning day each year, the number may double very soon if it isn't renovated," a second year student, Helal, told his friends while having tea at the terrace.

The condition of a block of Fazlul Huq Hall's main building is now at serious risk. Residents of the block said water seeps from the roof and parts of the roof fell down several times earlier.

Residents of the annex building of Haji Muhammad Muhsin Hall at the New Market area also made such a complaint.

Same condition prevails at the mess of Haji Muhammad Muhsin Hall.

Apart from the dormitories, some quarters for the teachers, officers and employees are also in poor condition. Many of the buildings were not renovated after construction.

Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz told The Bangladesh Observer that the authorities are aware of the conditions of the resident dormitories.

"We've already directed the concerned hall provosts to take urgent measures to renovate the buildings. And the experts of

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DU dormitories

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Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) will judge the conditions of the buildings very soon and those will be renovated according to their recommendations.

About the additional funds for the proposed renovation, the VC said the university authorities requested the University Grants Commission (UGC) to allocate funds to repair the halls immediately.

On the 17th anniversary of the Jagannath Hall tragedy, the university family commemorated the day with due respect and solemnity.

In memory of the deceased students, staff and guests, black flags were hoisted atop of all university installations with the university flag flying half-mast.

Students, teachers, officials and employees brought out a mourning procession from Aparajeyo Bangla in the morning and march to the monument of the October Memorial Building at Jagannath Hall. VC Prof SMA Faiz led the procession.

All political and socio-cultural organisations active in the university held different programmes to mark the day.

Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities' students held special prayer at the hall. Special munajat was also offered at the university's Central Mosque after Asr prayers.

Portraits, paintings and personal memorabilia of the deceased were displayed at an exhibition at the hall. Students of the dormitory also organised a blood donation programme.