

BARISAL BM COLLEGE

Common room crisis pushes females under open sky

M JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL, *Barisal*

Most of the female students of BM College in Barisal city have to sit under the open sky during breaks due to a shortage of space in the common room, which cannot accommodate more than 60 students.

Among 26,500 students of the college, which was established in 1889 in the heart of the city, half are female. Of them, more than 5,000 female students, studying under 22 honours and 19 master's programmes, visit the campus every day, said the college principal, SM Enamul Hakim.

During recess most female students have to sit outside as the common room is too small, he told The Daily Star.

Classes start at 8:30am and end at 4:00pm.

"We have to stay on the campus five to six hours a day, so it is important for us to take rest during recess between classes," said Mashriya Mitu, a student of Islamic history and culture.

"But our common room has many problems, space crisis being one of them. As a result most of the female students have to spend time standing or sitting outside," she added.

Tanzila Aktar, a student of political science, said she sits outside almost every day with her friends during breaks as getting a seat in the common room is quite difficult.

On the other hand, a long queue in front of the two toilets in the common room is a regular scenario, said a caretaker of the common room, adding, even the electric fans are not enough for the large number of stu-

dents.

Many female students also alleged that there is a shortage of newspapers in the common room. It keeps only two to three dailies, they said.

Those who come from distant places suffer most as they have to wait till the afternoon for the college bus to return home, said a group of female students, who come from Jhalakathi, 22km from the campus.

A bigger common room with adequate seating arrangements and other necessary facilities is a must, they said.

Recognising the problems, the principal said they are trying to manage another female common room as early as possible.

Facilities in the existing common room will be increased very soon, he added.