

JnU yet to identify mass killing fields, graves

Emrul Hasan Bappi

THE Jagannath University authorities are yet to identify mass killing fields and mass graves on the campus where marauding Pakistani forces and their collaborators killed hundreds of people and dumped the bodies during the 1971 War for Independence.

The marauding forces set up a camp on the campus of the then Jagannath College in Old Dhaka where they brought people abducted by

them, tortured them, killed them and buried the bodies in mass graves at places on the campus during the nine months of the liberation war, according to 'Muktijuddha Kosh', a series of volumes on the Liberation War.

The then college authorities discovered at least seven skeletons, rags, women's ornaments and shoes when they dug in front of the students union office on the campus on January 8, 1972, the book said.

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Employees who witnessed the atrocities said that the authorities upgraded two buildings of science faculty, which were one-storied in 1971, to four-storey buildings after 1985 instead of preserving the one-storey buildings that had been used as tortures and detention centre by the Pakistani forces.

Vice-chancellor Mijanur Rahman told New Age on Thursday, 'The authorities are yet to take any step to preserve the places.'

He, however, said that the whole university was a concentrations camp during the War for Independence and

many people were tortured and killed there.

The mass graves, however, cannot be identified because of lack of evidence, he said.

'Now it is impossible to preserve the places separately because of land crisis on the campus,' he said, adding, 'we would build a memorial for the people who were killed here and engrave their names on it if we get their names.'

Jagannath University history teacher Shahid Kadar Chowdhury, also trustee of 1971 Genocide Archive and Museum Trust, said that at the outset of the war, the

Pakistani forces stormed into the then Jagannath College principal Bazlur Rahman's residence (now Rofiq Bhaban) and turned it into their 'torture cell.'

He also said that the military dumped more than 1,000 people in the science faculty field of the university.

The students are now using the place as a playground, he added.

He also urged the authorities to take steps to preserve the places.

Physics department staff of the university Robindra Chandra De, who had also served there during the lib-

eration war, said that there was a branch of a bank on the campus the marauding military tortured and killed many people.

He said that the authorities were constructing a twenty-storied academic building on the place.

The then Jagannath College English department staff Amir Hossain said that they [staffs] had found many skeletons and bones while weeding the digging the science faculty field after the war.

He also said that they saw many rags, ornaments, hair of women in various rooms in the buildings after the war.