

Students of DU Kuwait Maitree Hall protest over 'delay' in water contamination report

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A group of students of University of Dhaka staged a midnight protest and held a press briefing outside Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall, alleging that hall authorities were delaying the publication of laboratory reports on contaminated water supplied at the dormitory.

According to the students, several students have fallen ill in recent days due to water contamination, with many seeking treatment at medical facilities.



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The incidents triggered growing frustration among students over the hall's water supply and filtration system.

The protesting students alleged that the hall administration was engaging in “delaying tactics” instead of making the water quality test reports public. They demanded transparency and accountability over the issue.

Speaking at the press briefing, hall resident Aditi Islam said the movement began after students were allegedly forced to delete social media posts about the crisis.

“Today we had our hall general meeting. We asked several questions but did not receive proper answers to any of them,” she said.

She then announced a three-point demand on behalf of the protesting students.

First, the students demanded that the hall administration publicly disclose spending in major sectors such as health, education, and food, alleging that authorities failed to provide a clear breakdown of the hall budget.

Second, they sought accountability over why authorities only moved to repair the water filters after a large number of students had become ill. The students warned of further action if no explanation was provided by Thursday.

Third, Aditi alleged that students’ freedom of expression had been obstructed.

“No one has the right to stop students from speaking out, whether online or verbally. If no explanation is given by tomorrow, students will demand the resignation of the hall administration and hall union members,” she added.

She also alleged that students living in “gonorooms” were being charged an additional Tk 2,000 outside official fees and accused the authorities of forcing students to live in “inhumane conditions”.

Around 60 female resident students of University of Dhaka’s Kuwait Maitree Hall fell ill in a suspected waterborne outbreak earlier this month, with several requiring medical treatment.

Students reportedly suffered from vomiting, diarrhoea and other related symptoms. Of them, six to seven became seriously ill and were administered saline, according to hall union leaders.

“The illness started a few weeks after the hall’s water tanks were cleaned. We suspect that residue from chemicals used during the cleaning process may have contaminated the water and caused the illness,” said Rafia Rehnuma Hridy, vice-president of the hall union, on May 9.

According to her, the spread was highest on May 6, and six to seven students had to be admitted to Shahid Mortuza Medical Centre for treatment.

Attempts to contact hall parliament members and the hall provost for comment were unsuccessful.