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RU website: A window into hollow

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When the expectations among the Rajshahi University students are running high in terms of an informative web presence of the educational institution, the authorities have apparently failed to deliver up to the expectations.

Students said the authorities seem indifferent to updating the university's website, containing detailed information about its academic programmes, research projects, syllabuses, activities, goal, faculty members, so on and forth.

The RU authorities launched the website in late 2016. But, many important sections of the website still remain vacant. When clicked, every time a blank page, saying "The page is under construction", pops up.

When browsed, the sections of academic council, Senate, syndicate, Teacher-Student Centre (TSC), medical centre, facilities, and many more provide broken links.

There is an important section named "Activities" in every RU top official's profile page. Again an empty page came up when this correspondent visited the vice chancellor's link to find his activities.

On the other hand, many of the faculty members' profiles only contain their names, designations and email addresses. And, when clicked for "Details", surprisingly an empty page, saying "Page Not Found", came up. In addition, names of many new lecturers were yet to be updated in the list.

As a result, an admission seeker cannot find the academic biographies of the faculty members which can play a vital role in choosing courses, departments and even universities.

Hossain Mithu, a student of mass communication and journalism department, said, "I took information of some teachers from the website for my master's research, but all those were found out-dated."

Expressing dissatisfaction over the poor maintenance of the website, a master's student of computer science and engineering told The Daily Star that the official website of any university is like a window into the institute's different activities for attracting students and researchers.

But, the RU website fails to provide enough information to the students and visitors, he said.

Mahfuz Munna, a master's student of marketing department, said, "The official website of a university must contain information about its scholarships and exchange programmes. Many public and private universities in the country have such sections on their websites."

But the RU authorities do not care about putting information on its website regarding the admission procedure of foreign students, he said, adding that updated information could have attracted more foreign students to RU.

Saif Al-Qaisi, a second-year Jordanian student of EEE, said "Initially, it was tough for me to make new friends as I am the only foreign student in my class. So, I visited the website to know about other foreign students. But I did not find anything."

If the authorities create an individual section for foreign students, it will be of great help, he said.

Sangeeta Ahmed, an English student, said, there are several cultural organisations in the university.

The university authorities do not take any initiative to highlight them on the website, she said, adding that the initiative could help create a positive image of the university.

Jewel Mamun, an economics student, said, "We have many academic buildings and dormitories named after great personalities."

"But many of us do not know the history and sacrifices of these great personalities. The authorities can update details about them in 'Academic Building' and 'Residential Hall' sections of the website", he added.

A teacher, seeking anonymity, told this correspondent that the university authorities never publish the decisions taken in regular syndicate meetings.

But the students have a right to know them. These decisions should be uploaded on the website, he said.

Another teacher, Abdullahil Baki of mass communication and journalism department, said, "We have to face problems especially during the admission season when the server remains down."

When contacted, Director of RU ICT Centre, Prof Khademul Islam Molla, said they were only assigned to build the website.

"There are over 1,200 teachers; so, it is quite impossible for us to gather and update all of their academic information," he said, urging the teachers to update their own profiles as they have been given ID and passwords.

While talking to The Daily Star, RU Vice Chancellor Prof M Abdus Sobhan said he had already been informed that the website was not being updated regularly.

He will instruct the responsible bodies to update the website soon, added the VC.

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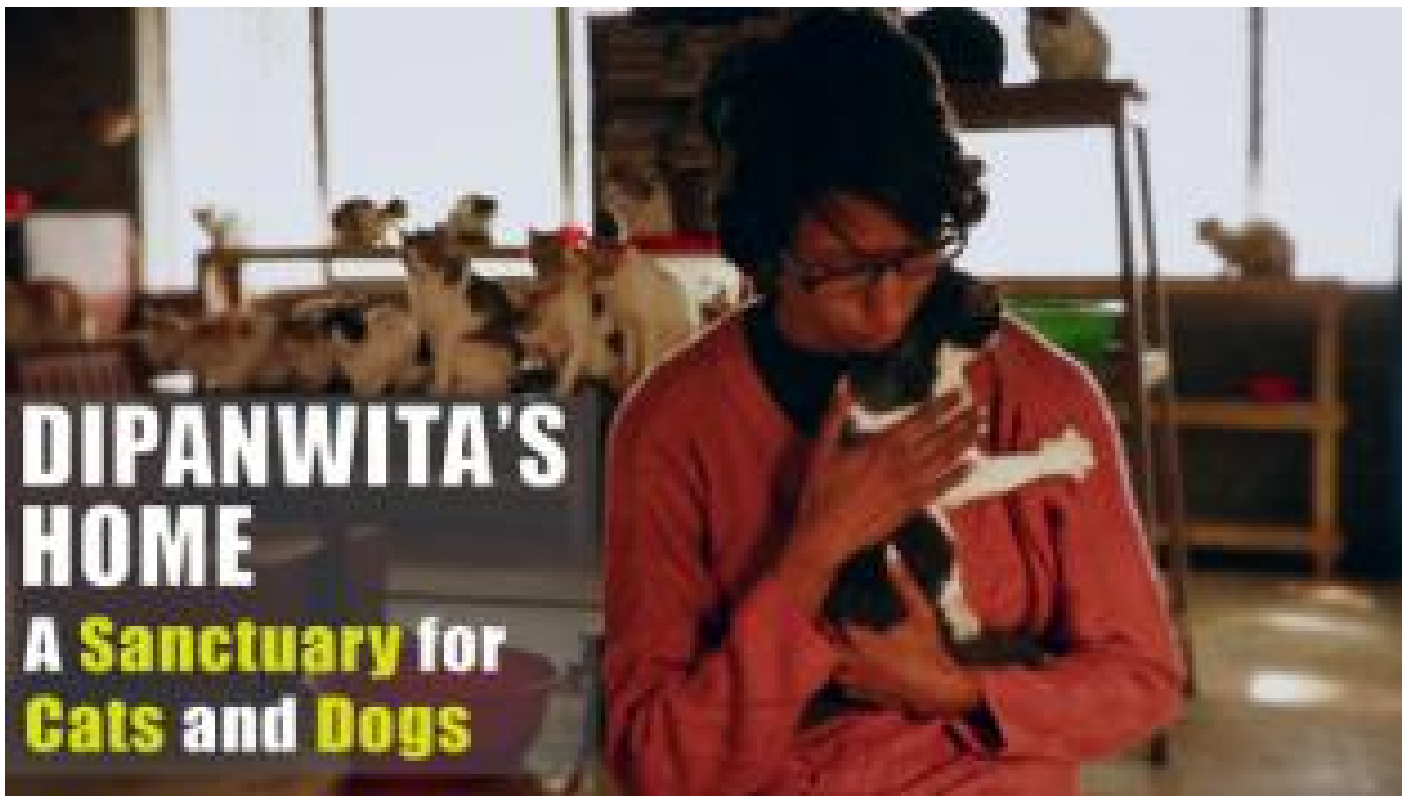
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