

BCL decides who to stay in DU hall

Asks first-year students to submit proof of allegiance

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League activists have driven out 97 freshmen from Salimullah Hall of Dhaka University, saying the students have no right to stay in the dormitory because they have no involvement with the ruling party.

Mostly from outside Dhaka, the students had no place to stay other than the dormitory.

Around 10:00am on Monday, the hall unit BCL asked all the first-year students to gather near the guest room to verify their political affiliation.

All the 97 were forced to leave the hall around 11:00am as they had failed to prove their links with the Awami League, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) or any other pro-government organisation, students said.

Earlier, the BCL unit had asked the freshers to bring references from AL leaders of their respective areas.

Asked why and on what ground they did this, Nizamul Islam Didar, general secretary of Salimullah Hall BCL, said, "We look after the accommodation of first-year students at the hall. Hall authorities do nothing in this regard."

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Students with reference from AL leaders will be given "special facilities" at the hall, he added.

The university authorities too backed the BCL action.

"Legally a first student can't stay at a hall he or she is attached to. But we allow them for socio-economic reasons," acting proctor Amjad Ali told The Daily Star.

He further said, "Since it is the Chhatra League that monitors who will stay at the halls and who are not, it can verify the political affiliations of students."

Acting hall provost Mahbulul Haq Joarder echoed the views of the acting proctor. While visiting the hall soon after the incident, he said the first-year students were illegally staying in the dormitory and the administration has nothing

to do in this regard.

This correspondent found outsiders were occupying at least 25 rooms of Salimullah Hall. Some of the rooms are 101, 139, 140, 15, 119, 79, 44 and 48. Mahbulul Haq Joarder, however, did not admit this.

Around 5,600 students are enrolled into the Dhaka University each year. Most of them are from different parts of the country and they heavily depended on the university's dormitories.

In other dormitories, there are first-year students with the backing of Hall unit BCL leaders.

The dormitories of public universities are mostly controlled by pro-ruling party student organisation. The hall administration virtually has no say about the room allocations among students.