

JHENIDAH GOVERNMENT VETERINARY COLLEGE

Teacher crisis hampers education

BY AZIBOR RAHMAN WITH ANDREW EAGLE

Eleven grand buildings: an academic building, a laboratory, girls' and boys' dormitories and a VIP guest dormitory; lecturer quarters, a principal's residence, employees' buildings, garage, poultry shed and mosque; the fashionable, new campus of Jhenidah Government Veterinary College just about sparkles. What more could students enrolled at Khulna Division's only veterinary college institute possibly ask for?

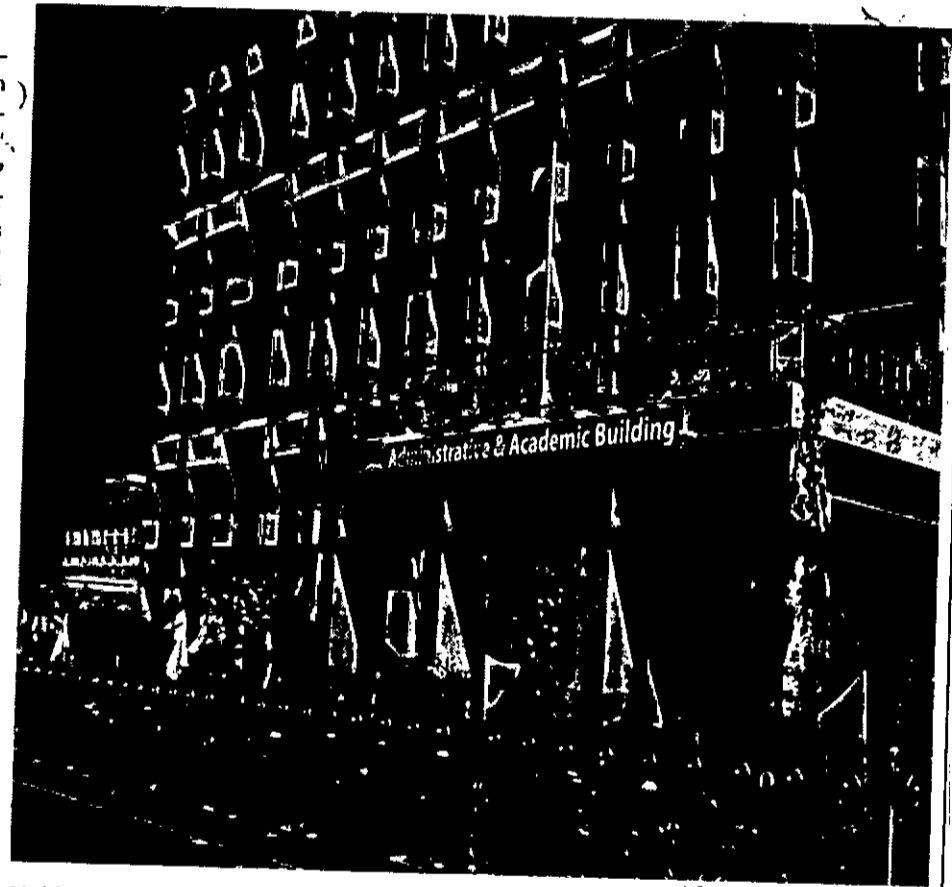
Well, they could ask for teachers...

According to office assistant Jahidul Islam, the veterinary college was built at a cost of Tk 35 crore on 10.17 acres of land beside the Jhenidah - Chuadanga road in two phases, with construction running from 2009 - 2012.

On 8 October 2013, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the fine institution. Yet to date, not a single teacher has been permanently assigned.

The first 60 students took admission in the 2014 session with just 12 teachers posted on deputation against 109 posts.

"Classes don't run smoothly because of the teacher shortage," says student Nitya Nanda



Haldar. "Besides, we have an electricity problem. We need proper connection to the national grid in order to run multimedia equipment and microscopes."

"Not all classes are being held," says the principal, Aminul Islam, "It's difficult to run the college efficiently with only deputed teachers who may not stay here in the long term." To add to the college's woes, its non-

teaching employees have been working without salary for the past 22 months.

Jhenidah's deputy commissioner Shafikul Islam says it is a matter of sorrow that such a grand and expensive veterinary college lacks teachers. He says he has raised the matter with the education ministry and that it is awaiting the availability of revenue. "Teachers will

be recruited very soon," he says, optimistically.

Undoubtedly the students hope so. For the 2015 session a further 60 students are due to be admitted with a corresponding need for 14 more teachers to maintain the most basic education services. Without adequate manpower, this palatial institution is at risk of looking like a white elephant.