

## DU BIJOY EKATTOR HALL Where stay to be 10 times costlier than other halls

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The Bijoy Ekattor Hall of Dhaka University is going to be no match for other dormitories with regard to its annual charge.

The authorities of the DU's newest hall have asked the students to pay Tk 3,600 each in annual fees, 10 times higher the charges in eight other dormitories.

They cited high operational cost as the only reason for the hefty annual fee, much to the anger of the students.

Inaugurated in November, 2013, the hall authorities started taking in students in 2014-15 academic year. At that time, each student paid around Tk 5,000, including annual charge, said hall sources.

On November 9, the authorities put up a notice at the dormitory saying that each student has to pay Tk 3,600 in annual charge by December 10 to renew their identity cards. Failure in paying the fee would result in automatic cancellation of their seat allotment, it added.

However, hall Provost Prof A.J.M. Shafiqul Alam Bhuiyan last night told The Daily Star that they decided to reduce the fees to Tk 3,300 from Tk 3,600. The amount will be payable in three installments, he added.

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## Where stay

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This correspondent talked to the authorities of at least 12 halls of the university's 20 dormitories and found that the annual charge at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall, Sir Salimullah Hall, Shaheed Sergeant Zahurul Haque Hall, Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall, Kabi Jasimuddin Hall, Muktiyoddha Ziaur Rahman Hall, Begum Rokeya Hall and Sir AF Rahman Hall is Tk 360.

The Jagannath Hall charges Tk 800, including Tk 250 for Saraswati Puja, while Shamsunnahar Hall collects Tk 560, including Tk 200 for religious programmes and medical services, Fazlul Haque Hall Tk 900 and Shahidullah Hall Tk 1,200. The two latter dormitories hiked the charges recently.

Prof Shafiqul said the annual fees at Bijoy Ekattor Hall was higher than many others halls because running the newly built dormitory is costly. "We have to pay many of our staff from the hall fund."

### PROTESTS

Pragatishil Chhatra Jote, an alliance of seven left-leaning student organisations, brought out a procession on the DU campus last evening, demanding that the authorities cut the charge immediately.

Earlier in the day, leaders of the platform at a press conference at Modhur Canteen issued a seven-day ultimatum to the hall authorities to reduce the charge. They warned of waging a tougher movement if their demand was not met within this period.

Chhatra Jote leaders said they would submit a memorandum to

DU Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique today in this regard.

Talking to this newspaper, the DU VC said, "As the establishment fee and other maintenance costs of the newly built hall are higher than those in other dormitories, students will have to pay more to stay here. The annual fee of the hall is affordable."

About the process of fixing the annual charge, he said the hall authorities initially propose an amount which is later finalised by the university authorities.

"The facilities at the hall are not better than those in other dormitories of the university. But I have to pay about 10 times more than my friends," said a student of Bijoy Ekattor Hall on condition of anonymity.