

Seat crisis undermines JU residential status

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ASADUZZAMAN Rizvi, a first year student of international relations at Jahan-girnagar University, during his admission in 2014-15 academic year had hoped to get a seat in one of the student halls of the country's lone residential public university.

But with half of the year already passed and course final examination just around the corner, he still has to stay in the so-called 'gana room', where first year students must stay huddled on the floor before they are shifted to the rooms where each of them will have a seat to his or her name.

Till then, they must prepare their lessons squatting on the floor and sleep amid various inconveniences of a shared room.

'Even during my class tutorial exam and assignment, I have to stay here. Preparation for the final exam won't be well if we don't get seat before our final exam. I have already done bad in my tutorial exam,' said a frustrated Rizvi, who is one of

the 120 students staying in the untidy reading room of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall.

Around 2,200 students, who enrolled in the academic year, have now been staying in such 'gana rooms' facing various problems such as unhealthy environment, polluted water, lack of ceiling fan and light and frequent load-shedding.

Overstaying of students of the 38th (2008-2009 academic sessions) and the 39th (2009-2010 academic sessions) batches due to session jam ranging from two to three years, illegal staying of wards, ruling party-backed students using four- or two-seated rooms individually, unplanned enrolment of students, and failure of the authorities to fairly distribute the seats — all these are blamed on this accommodation crisis.

In the last two years, the university authorities had said they would take in students only against the vacant seats in the halls, but they did not give a single seat to a fresher.

Asking the seniors, who

already completed the Master's degree to vacate the dorms, the authorities just put up a notice which has hardly any effect as they initiate no move to drive them out.

In Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall, there are 768 seats while 1,213 students have been attached to the hall. Of the students, 159 have completed their Master's this year but they are yet to leave the hall.

In Mir Moshraf Hossain Hall, 1,183 students have been attached against 716 seats while around 200 students have completed their Master's.

The administration has asked us to allot the vacant seats to the new students of 2015-16 academic session, said BBH hall officials Jalal Uddin.

All the halls accommodate students almost double their capacity. Al Biruni Hall has 795 students against 424 seats. Shaheed Salam-Barkat Hall 700 students against 396 seats, Mowllana Bhashani Hall 1,135 students against 764 seats, 512 students against 340 seats at

Nawab Faizunnesa Hall, 320 students at Fazilatunnesa Hall against 216 seats, 700 students at Begum Khaleda Zia Hall against 512 seats, 900 students at Jahanara Imam Hall against 504 seats, 800 students at Pritilata Hall against 504 seats, 672 students at Sheikh Hasina Hall against 650 seats.

Md Abdulla Al Naim, a fresher of MH Hall, said, 'It is not possible to study in "gana room". At some halls, even eight to 12 second and third year students are still staying in four-seated rooms sharing beds and floors. Study is not possible in such environment.'

Associate Professor Alamgir Kabir, also provost of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall, said, 'When we ask the students to vacate the halls, they put forth their BCS exam as an excuse while some get admitted into evening programme in several departments and urged the hall authorities to consider their problem only for three to four months.'

When contacted, Professor Sahidur Rashid of ge-

ography department, who is also chairman of the hall provost committee and provost of MB Hall, told New Age, 'Most of the senior students overstay and cite their rag programme when we ask them to leave the hall.'

'We have a plan to arrange the rag programme after the honors exam every year so that the students can vacate the seats in time.'

JU registrar Abu Bakkar Siddique said, 'We have already asked all hall provosts to take action against the overstaying students. Besides, construction of one male and a female hall is expected to end by December this year which will house 1,000 more students.'

Pro-vice chancellor Professor Abul Hossain told the New Age, 'As some departments are still in grip of session jam, accommodation crisis persists. However, the crisis will be solved soon.'

'Construction of two female dorms and a male dorm are going on that will ease the present seat crisis,' he added.