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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Ragging is cause of Jadavpur University student's death, indicates rights body report

TNN | Aug 24, 2023, 05.35 AM IST



KOLKATA: The first report by the West Bengal Human Rights Commission, a statutory body, indicated the cause of the death of the 17-year-old student of Jadavpur University as ragging. The rights body report is the first among multiple agencies probing the student's death case, including police, a state fact-finding committee, UGC, state child rights body, two JU committees and the NHRC. The report by the state rights panel was based on ground investigation, and statements by hostel boarders, JU officials and some witnesses present during the incident.

JU officials pleaded ignorance about the WBHRC preliminary report and declined to comment.

WBHRC chairperson, Justice (retd) Jyotirmay Bhattacharya, said the commission would soon go through the report before passing its orders and making recommendations. He indicated they would also consider police report and replies from JU before passing the final orders. The WBHRC had asked JU and police to submit their reports by Thursday.

The rights body can penalise, compensate and ask state agencies to take specific action against any person. WBHRC additional SP Santi Das (Basak) had visited the JU campus a number of times to probe the death, collected information and spoken to JU officials and teachers. Sources said the team was not satisfied with lack of

surveillance on the campus. The findings also pointed out that JU officials had failed to clarify why enough measures were not taken to follow UGC guidelines on ragging or those related to Raghavan Committee recommendations. The functioning of the anti-ragging cell is also under question. JU officials are yet to depose before the commission and some have pleaded for additional time.

NHRC had issued a notice to the state, DGP and JU's registrar and expressed anguish over the lapses on the part of the JU authorities. Interim VC Buddhadeb Sau on Wednesday said they would respond to NHRC soon.