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'Jadavpur University fresher seen running across corridor naked minutes before fall'

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KOLKATA: Minutes before the first-year Bengali honours student at Jadavpur University took the fatal plunge from the second floor balcony of the Main Hostel on August 9, fellow hostelmates saw him run across the corridor naked and attempt to first enter the toilet to take cover and then rush into a room from where he was dragged out by a third-year engineering student and made to stand without a shred of cloth on him in full glare of seniors. This is the shocking finding of the JU internal probe panel report that uncovers the utter humiliation and tremendous mental stress the 17-year-old had been subject to on August 9. His torment had started at 7.30 pm and continued till 11.40 pm. The corridor scene, as witnessed by several students, had taken place

between 11.30 pm and 11.45 pm.

As per the report, the last straw came between 11 pm and 11.45 pm when the boy was held back by fourth-year engineering student Satyabrata Roy and other seniors while everyone, including other freshers, attended an all-hosteller general body meeting. The panel's report said he was behaving in a nervous manner in accompaniment with Roy. Around 11.30 pm, one of the boarders, who deposed his statement before the committee, heard a cry for help. The fresher was seen "running in a completely naked state, desperately trying to enter the toilet... and then rushing to room no. 65," said the report. But when he tried to close the door, third-year engineering student Md Arif and others pulled him out. The report said, "Thereafter, he was reportedly offered a bottle of water, which he gulped a bit, and then threw the bottle at Md Arif, all the while standing stark naked in front of seniors... facing

utter humiliation."

Earlier, around 7.30 pm, he was taken to room 59 along with other freshers and forced to shout "highly objectionable, sexist and abusive lines" directed towards the women residents of the adjacent police quarters by ex-student Sourav Chowdhury and four others. Chowdhury further intimidated him saying that police will take action against him. At that moment, the minor got scared and complained of stomach pain. The seniors gave him medicines.

The fresher was seen sweating profusely during dinner around 8.20 pm and he reportedly said that he was under "tremendous pressure from his senior roommates" and that "seniors were indulging in heavy drinking in his room".

The next session of ragging took place at room 104 between 9 pm and 10.45 pm where the fresher was insisted upon to put his signature in a complaint letter addressed to dean of students.

The panel said in its report that he was "ragged in isolation" and it was a "well thought of act of cruelty" as many seniors, pass-outs and mess panel members did not attend GB meeting. The panel, however, did not get conclusive evidence of the actual incident when he fell.