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# Boy who died singled out for severe ragging: Jadavpur University probe panel

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KOLKATA: The victim was singled out for severe pre-planned ragging, which included possible sexual abuse — the inquiry committee formed by Jadavpur University to probe into the circumstances leading to the death of a fresher has concluded.

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The 17-year-old boy fell from the second-floor balcony of a hostel on August 9 allegedly during ragging by seniors who were staying in the facility illegally. The resident of Nadia district in West Bengal

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In its report submitted to the authorities, the committee said there are two possibilities for his death – "a case of abetted incident and a case of homicide".

The probe panel, the members of which visited the hostel and talked to the stakeholders, however, could not conclusively say in its report the reasons behind the "tragic fall" of the student which led to his death.

A total of 13 men, all former or current students, who were boarders of the hostel, were arrested in connection with the case.

"As it seems, he (the victim) was singled out for ragging, which was carried out in a systematic planned manner, having deliberately isolating him for severe ragging, while the rest of his batch-mates were far from him attending a hostel general body meeting," the report read.

It stated that the first-year undergraduate student of the Bengali department was ragged in phases on that evening.

At around 6.30 pm, he was taken to a room along with six-seven other freshers by one of the main accused where they were forced to shout "highly objectionable, sexist, and abusive" words towards the female residents of the adjacent police quarters.

After being compelled to follow the commands, he burst into tears.

The next session of ragging took place in another room, between 9 pm and 10.45 pm, where the boy was forced to put his signature in a complaint letter addressed to the Dean of Student, allegedly drafted by seniors, against a day scholar of the Department of Bangla, in presence of nearly 12-15 boarders.

"After this..., the freshers, except the boy, were asked to attend an all hostellers General Body (GB) meeting which was held at the playground adjacent to A1 block at around 11 pm," the report said.

One of those who deposed before the panel said while the GB meeting was on, the boy was seen standing in the lobby of the second floor along with two boarders.

Those who deposed reported to the committee that there was a loud cry (for help) by someone from the second floor of the A-2 block at past 11.30 pm.

One of them who rushed to the spot after hearing the cry was reported to have seen the boy running naked, and when he was trying to enter a room, two-three seniors pulled him out.

The boy reportedly again started running desperately along the corridor of the 2nd floor A-2 block.

The report said, "Information regarding the subsequent movements, just prior to his fatal fall, is rather uncertain and vague, as none of the witnesses gave a clear-cut description of the incident, which could help in ascertaining the cause and sequence of the mishap."

The committee is of the view that the minor was "severely abused sexually too", it said.

"A large number of them found the victim lying on the road adjacent to the A-2 block in a naked condition in supine position. At that time the victim was found profusely bleeding from nostrils, ears and mouth and possibly from the back of the head," it said.

The students covered the lower body part of the victim with a 'gamchha' (traditional cotton towel, and took him to a hospital where he died.

The report flagged the planned isolation and subsequent ragging of the boy, as being a well thought of act of cruelty.

With PTI inputs