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Jadavpur University ragging case: Arrested students not to enter campus till acquitted of charges

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KOLKATA: In connection with the death of a Jadavpur University fresher, allegedly due to ragging and sexual molestation at the hostel, the university's executive council has made significant decisions.

The 13 individuals arrested in connection with the incident, including four students of the prestigious institute, have been prohibited from entering the university premises or campus. Furthermore, they have been barred from participating in any academic activities until they are cleared of the charges.

This prohibition will apply even if they are granted bail or parole, according to a university official who made the announcement on Wednesday.

The initial decision to bar the entry of more than 30 senior students accused of aiding and abetting the crime into the boys' hostel has been rescinded, the official added.

These decisions were made on the basis of recommendations from the internal inquiry committee report, which was submitted approximately a month ago.

"The EC decided unanimously not to allow those students who have been booked under POCSO and are now in custody, to enter the premises of the university till their names are cleared. The same applies to any researcher who is no longer a postgraduate student and is currently under arrest in connection with the August 9 ragging and death," the official explained.

A senior faculty member who attended the EC meeting clarified, "The initial decision was to disallow the entry of 30 senior boarders to the hostel but it was not finalized."

The 17-year-old Bengali honors student from Nadia died after falling from the second-floor balcony of the boys' main hostel on August 9th, just four days after joining as a guest of an ex-student who had been residing in the building for months. The fresher was rushed to a nearby hospital by fellow students and sadly passed away the following day.

The council has also decided to solicit the opinions of department heads regarding the possibility of conducting online classes due to reports that approximately nine students staying in the hostel have contracted dengue, the official added.

Souryadipto Roy, an office bearer of the SFI-affiliated Arts Faculty Students Union of the university, expressed their concerns, saying, "We demanded that only first-year students be accommodated in a block of the boys' main hostel, as promised by the institute. However, this has not been implemented yet. Instead, the internal committee's recommendation to bar the entry of 30 seniors into the hostel has not been accepted."

Roy further stated, "The executive committee on Tuesday promised to keep one block ready exclusively for first-year students by October 10. If they fail to do so, we will launch a strong movement to press for it and for action against those named in the incident report. We want an end to ragging and bullying, but students, as stakeholders, must be consulted."

Meanwhile, the Jadavpur University Teachers' Association general secretary, Partha Pratim Roy, disclosed that the association has written a letter to the registrar seeking clarification on the protocol for holding meetings under

the acting Vice-Chancellor. The JUTA referenced the West Bengal Universities and Colleges (Administration & Regulation) Act 2017, stating that the person holding the office of the vice-chancellor should not convene any meetings of the university's Syndicate or executive council without prior permission from the state government.

Regarding whether the university obtained prior consent to hold the meeting, the registrar responded on September 26 that a letter had been sent to the higher education department regarding the conduct of the EC meeting, but no response has been received as of yet.

(With inputs from PTI)