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JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

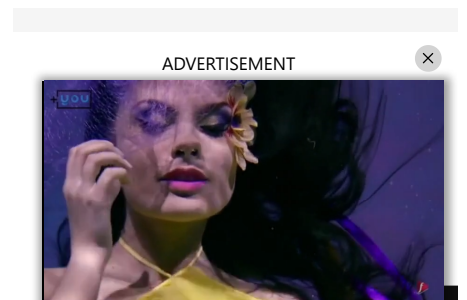
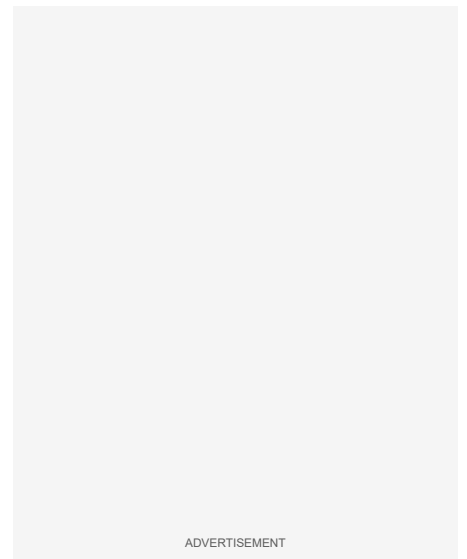
Jadavpur University panel report lists hurdles to ragging curbs

Report stated that students' welfare board had in 2019 sought suggestions from student unions 'to stop unauthorized stay in hostels' to curb ragging

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY | PUBLISHED 17.09.23, 05:15 AM



Bengal govt's anti-ragging helpline displayed on a poster outside the JU Main Hostel



A Jadavpur University committee has accused students, teachers and the university authorities of stalling steps to curb ragging.

The panel, constituted to probe the death of a first-year student because of alleged ragging in the university's main hostel, said in its report that the students' welfare board had in 2019 sought suggestions from student unions "to stop unauthorized stay in the hostels" to curb ragging.

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Referring to the meeting of the board, the report said: "(The board) resolved that the Students' Unions be asked to suggest some constructive measures to stop unauthorized stay in the hostels of the university by the ex-boarders and even outsiders. Such suggestions be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students...."

"Dean of Students informed the committee (fact-finding committee) that NO Students' Union suggested any constructive measures."

So the problem of unauthorised hostel occupants continued until the death of the 17-year-old boy on August 10, 2023, which forced the JU authorities to throw out the unauthorised residents from the main hostel.

"There is zero-tolerance to ragging policy in JU, but no effective initiatives from the teachers' organizations to curb ragging is evident," said the report.

"On the contrary, the committee received an instance that proves that sometimes individual teacher has diluted the anti-ragging initiatives taken

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by the greater community to curb the menace of ragging.”

The report said in one instance, “aggressive opposition by the Students’ Union (engineering faculty) coupled with lenient persuasion by a representing Faculty, and consequent indifferent attitude of the highest authority in the implementation of suspension orders” made the realisation of anti-ragging regulations, as proposed by the UGC, “a far-fetched goal”.

A JU official said the report revealed how stonewalling and inaction on the part of different stakeholders enabled ragging on the campus.

“It appeared that ragging in JU hostels and even in the academic premises is a regular phenomenon. Each stakeholder in general cannot deny their responsibility in this regard,” the report said.

Sourav Chowdhury, who was the first to be arrested in connection with student’s death, had completed his master’s in mathematics in 2022 but had stayed on in the hostel.

The report said how Sourav and other “pass-outs” ragged the student.

The Telegraph has reported on several occasions that punishment meted out to two students found guilty of ragging in 2013 could not be implemented following opposition from students who gheraoed then vice-chancellor Souvik Bhattacharyya with support from a section of teachers.

“One Teacher... & Member, Anti-Ragging Committee, requested to the then Vice-Chancellor, for a review of the punishment. The Vice-Chancellor was gheraoed for 52 hours demanding a revocation of the order,” the report said.

“It was found that during the tenure of the successive Vice-Chancellor, the suspension orders were not implemented and both the accused passed their engineering courses in due regular time.”

Partha Pratim Roy, general secretary of the university’s teachers’ association said: “We need to take more steps to carry out anti-ragging sensitization campaigns.”

The association in a note circulated to teachers on August 13 said “common people will hate teachers” if they remain mute spectators to ragging.

“According to the Dean of Students, more FIRs against alleged raggings were made prior to 2013-’14. But the university hardly made any FIR in such cases after that,” the report said.

The report has been sent to JU’s anti-ragging squad for examination.

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