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# 3 and 1/2 months after ragging death, JU takes 1.5 steps forward

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KOLKATA: Jadavpur University has taken only one-and-a-half steps in the past three-and-a-half months after a first-year Bengali department student, subjected to ragging, fell to his death from the second-floor balcony of the university's Main Hostel on August 9.

Probe reports, recommendations and statements have ostensibly outpaced action as JU officiating vice-chancellor Buddhadeb Sau and other stakeholders of the university continue to differ on multiple issues.

Sau on Wednesday blamed the students' welfare board for the failure in implementing several anti-ragging measures, recommended by multiple panels. State education minister

Bratya Basu said the turmoil on the campus was the reason for the "deadlock", indicating it was being "manufactured from outside". Basu said, "There was an inquiry committee formed by the higher education department that visited the university (after the ragging related death). The university matter (the governor appointing interim VCs by bypassing the state) is sub judice in the Supreme Court. We don't want to interfere in the university's internal matter. But there is an intentional influence from outside that is trying to turn the university atmosphere hostile. We hope the Supreme Court will see the matter and the turmoil in the university administration will change soon."

Following the death of the 17-year-old student in August, the university had set up an internal probe panel that had suggested the expulsion of four current students for their direct involvement in the ragging and suspension of at least 31 other students for varying numbers of semesters. It was also recommended that all those 35 students, who were either reportedly present at the Main Hostel at the time of the victim's ragging on August 9 or suppressed facts about the incident, be expelled from Main Hostel. Those steps were never implemented.

Immediately after the death, JU had shifted out first-years from Main Hostel to New Boys' Hostel on the campus, following the UGC guideline of lodging freshers separately from seniors. But the exercise was left incomplete as no final decision could be taken whether the freshers would be allotted a separate building or merely a floor. Sau on Wednesday said, "Year-wise hostel segregation was finalised at an Executive Council meeting and the students' welfare association was instructed to implement the step. Why has it not been implemented till now? I will ask them and, if required, will intimate the state government about it."

Of the 29 CCTV cameras that were planned to be installed on the main JU campus and the Salt Lake campus, only five CCTV cameras have been put up at the four gates of the main campus and at the gate of Main Hostel so far.

An executive council (EC) meeting was held on September 26, where it was finally decided that six current students who were arrested — Dipsekhar Dutta, Monotosh Ghosh, Md Asif Afzal Ansari, Ankan Sarkar, Satyabrata Roy and Md Arif — would be barred from the campus and the hostel. . JU said those six would not be allowed back unless "duly discharged from all allegations against them". The decision was implemented on November 24, two months after the decision was taken at the EC meeting.

JU received two more ragging complaints in October one from the main campus arts faculty and the other from the engineering faculty on the Salt Lake campus.

JUTA general secretary Partha Pratim Ray said, “Why have the authorities not taken necessary steps against the accused in the last three-and-a-half months? The VC is delaying action against the accused.”

The detective department has filed the charge sheet in the JU ragging case at Alipore Pocso court against six current and six ex-students. Police have dropped the murder charge against all the 12 but booked them for abetment of suicide of a child or insane person.