

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Laptop theft slur: JU MTech student in hospital after 'mental torture' at hostel

TNN | Jul 26, 2024, 09.22 AM IST



KOLKATA: More than 70 boarders of Jadavpur University's (JU) Main Hostel on Wednesday allegedly confined and "mentally tortured" a fellow boarder, accusing him of stealing a laptop, putting him in a state of panic and mental trauma, in a state of "near collapse" when taken to hospital.

The boarders even tried to resist a university medical officer from taking the victim - a computer science MTech student - to hospital, demanding in writing from the officer that she would be held responsible for anything that happens to the victim.

No complaint has been lodged. The JU registrar has told cops that Biswajit Pramanik had had a "panic attack".

Some boarders accused Pramanik of stealing a laptop. His ordeal

started around 8pm in the D block, after the laptop was recovered from the hostel. Medical officer Mitali Deb reached the spot at 8.30pm to find Pramanik surrounded by students, "like a pack of wolves".

When a section of boarders and the hostel superintendent informed JU dean of students Rajat Ray about the incident, he alerted the interim VC and pro-VC. The pro-VC instructed medical officer Mitali Deb to rush to Pramanik's rescue. Deb said she reached the spot around 8.30 pm to find "a large mob of students, like a pack of wolves, surrounding and attacking a single individual". "The boy was vulnerable, he was sweating profusely, his eyes protruding. He appeared to be in panic, unable to even speak. The mob was forcing him to write a 'confession letter'," Deb said.

Last Aug, a UG student died after falling from a balcony of a Main Hostel building, allegedly because of relentless ragging. "The memory of that incident is fresh, and I feared another unfortunate incident might occur," Deb told TOI.

Deb said she advised Biswajit Pramanik be hospitalized. But the students turned on her, refusing to let him go. They demanded a written statement from her, saying she would be responsible if "something bad" happened to Pramanik. A video of this unreasonable demand has surfaced.

Deb refused to comply, trying to reason with them and defuse the situation, but the students were adamant. The stand-off continued till about 10.30pm, when an ambulance was called and Pramanik taken to a hospital, in a state of "near collapse". He was administered saline and oxygen to stabilise his condition.

The boy's father and elder brother arrived from Purulia on Thursday. JU's anti-ragging committee members visited the hospital. "We spoke to the boy and told him there was nothing to fear. But he is feeling threatened," said a teacher.

The university registrar told police Pramanik suffered a panic attack. The Jadavpur police division (South Suburban Police) said the Jadavpur PS OC have been asked to inquire into the incident. No complaint has yet been lodged.

JUTA assistant general secretary Rajyeswar Sinha felt JU authorities should "probe the matter." This incident is similar to the June 28 case at Udayan Hostel, Bowbazar, when Irshad Alam was lynched on the suspicion of theft.

(inputs from Dwaipayan Ghosh)

