

# DU closed for 2 weeks to assess tremor risks

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JnU suspends classes, exams today



As the country experienced its third earthquake since Friday morning, the authorities yesterday decided to close Dhaka University for two weeks to assess tremor risks and carry out necessary renovations of residential halls.

Meanwhile, all classes and examinations at Jagannath University (JnU) will remain suspended today for the same reason.

At an emergency meeting of the DU Syndicate late last night, the authorities instructed residential students to vacate their halls by 5:00pm today.

The decision followed protests from female students of Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall, who demanded a safer campus.

Around 12:15am, many of them gathered in front of the 20-storey Swadhinota Bhaban, a residential building meant for third class staff, to take shelter there.

Students of Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall had already occupied 33 of the building's 144 vacant flats since Friday night, after a 5.7-magnitude earthquake shook the capital and triggered panic.

Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall Union Vice-President Nishita Zaman said, "A group of hall residents took position on the building's ground floor at 10:00pm, demanding safe accommodation. Minutes earlier, I heard they were trying to break the locks of vacant rooms to move in."

Students explained that they moved into the unused flats out of fear, accusing the university of ignoring long-standing warnings about unsafe hall conditions.

"This has been a problem for years," said third-year student Md Ramzan, who shifted his belongings from the hall to the staff quarters around 11:30pm. "We protested even six months ago, but nobody cared. After the earthquake, it became a matter of life and death. We are not here permanently, we only want the authorities to finally fix our hall."

Fourth-year student Robiul Islam described their daily anxiety. "While you sleep, the ceiling could fall on your head. If staff have these comfortable flats, why must we live with such uncertainty, especially when many of them rent out their allotted houses instead of living in them?"

A DU press release yesterday said all classes and examinations will remain suspended until December 6, and all residential halls must be vacated for a comprehensive post-earthquake inspection, risk assessment, and renovation.

"The Syndicate meeting considered the physical and mental distress students suffered due to the recent earthquake and aftershocks, and prioritised their overall safety," the notice said.

The Syndicate also noted that expert opinions from Buet engineers, the Planning and Development Office director, and the chief engineer were reviewed. Their assessment concluded that a thorough inspection of all halls is essential to evaluate structural risks and determine necessary repairs.

Jagannath University Vice-Chancellor Prof Rezaul Karim said, "Repeated earthquakes in the capital have created widespread anxiety among students and others on campus. Therefore, we are suspending all classes and examinations only for Sunday."

He said activities related to the JnUCSU election will continue as scheduled.

Two earthquakes were felt yesterday, marking three tremors in just 32 hours. The powerful quake killed 10 people in several parts of the country, including Dhaka.

## **7 HURT IN ALIA MADRASA CLASH**

Meanwhile, seven students were injured in a clash between two groups at Alia Madrasa in Dhaka's Bakshibazar last night.

The injured are Sadiq, 21, Moin, 22, Elias, 21, Omar Faruk, 21, Abu Bakr, 22, Walid, 22, and Enamul, 22.

All of them were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, police said.

The incident occurred around 10:00pm. Police first respondent to the scene and later army personnel were deployed to bring the situation under control.

Inspector Md Faruk, in-charge of the DMCH police outpost, told The Daily Star, "A milad mahfil was being held inside the madrasa. During the event, a verbal altercation broke out between two groups of students, which eventually escalated into a clash."

"All seven injured students came in with head injuries. However, they did not provide details about the exact cause behind the altercation," he added.