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A YEAR TO BUILD TWO, THREE YEARS NOT ENOUGH TO RENOVATE ONE

Xavier's hostel heartburn for Presi

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New Town: St Xavier's University has built and opened two 10-storey hostels on its New Town campus within a year of starting its first academic session, widening the infrastructure gap with its illustrious "rival" Presidency University that has failed to complete renovating the heritage Hindu Hostel in three years.

Presidency University has had to keep students in a temporary accommodation in New Town and deal with agitations because of the delay in renovating the 132-year old Hindu Hostel opposite its College Street

campus. A new hunger strike by students started on Monday.

For St Xavier's University, the challenge of carrying forward the legacy of its Park Street forebear has proved to be much easier.

Father Felix Raj, the vice-chancellor of St Xavier's University, said on Monday that 153 students had moved into the new hostels — one for boys and the other for girls — since August. They currently occupy four floors across the two buildings, which are part of a 17-acre campus.

Finishing touches are being given to the remaining six floors of the two buildings. All 10 floors of



The St Xavier's University girls' hostel on the New Town campus

each hostel will be fully operational soon, the vice-chancellor said.

St Xavier's University, run by the Jesuit Fathers, was set up in 2017 and the first batch commenced studies in July.

Construction of the hostels had started after the commencement of classes, magnifying the contrast with Presidency in terms of developing infrastructure.

The university had aimed to complete the hostels by this July, just in time to welcome the first batch of 90 students at the St Xavier's University Business School, a fully residential institution.

"We are happy that the hostels are complete within our targeted time. The two hostels can accommodate

580 students, 290 in each building and they have all the facilities that students would need," Felix Raj said.

The hostels have Wi-Fi, a cafeteria, reading rooms, a gym, indoor and outdoor games facilities and a 24-hour infirmary with round-the-clock nursing and a doctor on call.

The university has spent around Rs 32 crore building the hostels.

Students have to pay a fee of Rs 50,000, inclusive of lodging and food, for each semester lasting six months. "We might have to increase the amount to Rs 60,000 next," Father Felix Raj said.

Presidency charges Rs 250 a year for lodging.