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KAU opens for new session after deluge

Omaima Al-Fardan | Arab News

JEDDAH: Officials at King Abdulaziz University (KAU) have said that the university, which was flooded extensively on Nov. 25, opened for the new semester on Saturday. However, while almost all staff turned up, almost all students did not due to concern the campus would not be ready for classes.

Some of the worst affected areas in the city adjoin the university campus and parts of it were severely flooded. There had been concerns that the university would not open after the Eid break as a result of the flooding.

Both nearby Effat University and Dar Al-Hikma College have delayed reopening because of the flooding. However, KAU officials say most of the buildings were cleaned up in time for reopening.

The university also announced that work is back to normal at the university hospital after being affected by the floods. Osama Rayed, dean of the medical college and university hospital head manager, said that the university had made great efforts over the past week to bring the place back to normal.

He said that appointments for 60 percent of the outpatients attending the hospital had been kept.

A source at the university who did not want to be named said that student's halls were generally in good condition, but there were some problems. "Building No. 26, which is still under construction, is out of order. Most of the basements in the university buildings are flooded. Electricity in general inside the university is cut off. Phones lines are not working. Elevators are not working," he said.

He said that the offices of the faculty members are full of mud.

"In my opinion it will be some time before the university is fully operational," he said. "We do not know if our computers are working. The ground is still muddy and full of water and more cleaning needs to be done."

The roads inside the university are full of mud and cleaning efforts are underway. Much of the parking space in front of the university buildings is one pool of water. Private contractors have been hired to clean the sludge and open some of the roads inside. The underpass in the western side of the university was closed on Saturday.

An employee in one of the colleges was sent home for one week after the head of her department told her that most of the labs were flooded and nothing is to be done. She said that the one-week vacation maybe extended if the conditions do not improve.

One university student who decided to move to the women's dorm went back home because most students were absent.

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