



## JNU Row Stokes Debate on Accessibility Over Affordability



Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), one of India's premier universities, had been offering education to students at subsidised rates all these years. However, it has been in the news lately over a proposed three-fold hike in hostel charges, which is being seen as a huge

burden on students who hail from socio-economically marginalised backgrounds. . Intense student protests over the issue has brought classes to a halt for nearly two weeks now. [When the students tried to march down to the Parliament, the demonstration led to a showdown between hundreds of JNU students and the Delhi police, leaving at least 15 students injured, including a visually impaired student.](#) The Empowered Committee, formed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, was told the university has a [financial deficit of over Rs 12 crore](#), forcing it to hike the hostel fee. The JNU row raises two important questions: of accessibility over affordability for higher education and the right of students to demand their rights.

## Student Loan Debt Seen at \$2 trillion by 2021

[Student loan debt has now become a global crisis.](#)

Economists project an accumulated student loan debt of \$2 trillion by 2021, and, at a growth rate of 7% per year, as much as \$3 trillion or more by the end of the next decade. In the US, the country's overall student debt reached a record \$1.6



trillion in 2019. Japan has been lending over \$9 billion to students every year since 2010. In England, a university charge for a single year is £9,000 (more than US\$14,000). In the UK, the government expects the value of outstanding loans to reach over £100 billion by 2018. The possible reasons for the student loans turning into debt is lack of information and support for students from state and local governments on issues related to high school education. Over a period of time, the tuition fee has increased. That apart, house rent, food and other expenses weigh on the students. With unemployment on the rise, the students have not been able to repay the loans, leading to a vicious cycle of debt

## Recommended Watch- Turtles Can Fly by Bahman Ghobadi,



Bahman Ghobadi, the Iranian-Kurdish director who made the lacerating A Time for Drunken Horses, has written again a spiritual bulletin from the war-ravaged Middle East, and placed children at the centre of the action. Just before the outbreak of [the war on Saddam Hussein](#) , a mass of refugees are encamped outside a village on the Iraqi-Turkish border in Kurdistan. Children already mutilated by mines make a living by finding unexploded devices and selling them to the resident UN personnel. A kid called "Satellite" tries to find a TV antenna dish so that everyone can find out what is going on and when the war will start. His panic-stricken hunt for modern telecoms is undercut by the fact that something more reliable is near to hand:one of the mutilated children has the

gift of prophecy and feels the war coming nearer and nearer. Bahman Ghobadi has dedicated [Turtles Can Fly](#) to "all the innocent children in the world — the casualties of the policies of dictators and fascists."

