

NHRC Notice To UP Govt After Cong Sought Action Against 'Police Atrocities'



NEW DELHI:- The NHRC has sent a notice to the Uttar Pradesh government days after a Congress delegation led by senior party leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra met top officials of the rights panel and sought action against alleged police atrocities on anti-CAA protesters in the state, an official said on Monday.

The Congress on January 27 moved the National Human Rights Commission demanding action against alleged police atrocities on the protesters in the state, claiming that victims have been made accused in case-related FIRs and no police officer has been named.

The delegation had met the NHRC chairperson and other

senior officials, and made a detailed 31-page representation which included videos and photographs as "evidence" of alleged atrocities and human rights violations in the state.

After the meeting, Rahul Gandhi alleged that the UP government has "gone to war against its own people" and urged the NHRC to act decisively to protect the "constitutional rights of our citizens".

"The NHRC has taken cognisance of the issue after a Congress delegation visited the commission recently and met the top officials. A notice has been issued to the chief secretary in this connection and response has been sought in six weeks," the official said.

Delhi Elections Counting: Tight Security In Place Today

Tight security arrangements have been put in place at various centres across the national capital where the counting of votes polled in the high-stakes February 8 Delhi Assembly elections will take place on Tuesday.

The curiosity among people to know the outcome of the elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly has heightened post-exit polls, that has forecast a big win for the ruling AAP, and the delay in announcement of the final voter turnout by authorities.

The election, largely seen as a battle between the ruling Aam Aadmi Party and the BJP, which went aggressive during the high-octane campaign, was held on Saturday, sealing the fate of 672 candidates -- 593 men and 79 women.

Nearly 24 hours after the polling ended in Delhi, the Election Commission on Sunday announced that the final voter turnout was 62.59 per cent, five per cent less than 2015, and asserted that it followed the laid down process to compile data, after the AAP questioned the "delay".

Authorities in the Delhi CEO Office are gearing up for the counting of votes and adequate arrangements have been made at the centres spread across 21 locations in the national capital, spanning 11 districts, officials said.

The counting centres are located at CWG Sports Complex in East Delhi, NSIT Dwarka in West Delhi, Meerabai Institute of Technology and G B Pant Institute of Technology in Southeast Delhi, Sir CV Raman ITI, Dheerpur in Central Delhi, and Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Bawana in North Delhi, among other places.

There will be 33 counting observers, officials said.

There were 13,780 polling booths where every vote was accounted for by the presiding officers which is a time-consuming exercise, Sandeep Saxena, Senior Deputy Election Commissioner, said at a press conference on Sunday.

Critical and vulnerable polling

locations, numbered 545 and spanned 3,843 booths.

In view of the ongoing anti-citizenship law protest in Shaheen Bagh, the Delhi CEO's Office had put all five polling stations in the area under the "critical" category.

Security personnel kept guard at strong rooms storing electronic voting machines (EVMs). Delhi Chief Electoral Officer Ranbir Singh, a day ahead of the polls, had said all EVMs have been tested and they are "fool-proof and non-tamperable".

Exit polls on Saturday predicted an easy win for the AAP, which sought to retain power on development plank, against the BJP that ran an aggressive campaign centred around the issues of anti-CAA protests and nationalism.

Most exit polls also predicted that Congress is unlikely to open its account even this time in Delhi, which it ruled from 1998-2013.

Looking to capture power after 22 years, the BJP had mounted one of the most aggressive campaigns in the Delhi Assembly polls, with Union Home Minister Amit Shah leading the saffron charge on its planks of Hindutva and nationalism, and its strident opposition to Shaheen Bagh protests.

The issue often dominated the political discourse during the campaign, with many BJP leaders targeting the ruling AAP, and the Congress, accusing them of "misleading people" holding anti-CAA protests in Delhi.

A section of voters on Saturday claimed that the prolonged street agitation demanding revocation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was "not an issue in the beginning of the campaign" but "political parties had slowly turned it into one".

Ballimaran constituency recorded the highest voter turnout of 71.6 per cent among all the 70 assembly seats in the national capital, while Delhi Cantonment brought up the rear in polling percentage, according to data shared by officials on Sunday.



Delhi Police Stop Anti-CAA March From Jamia To Parliament

NEW DELHI:- Scores of Jamia Millia students and residents of Jamia Nagar on Monday got into a scuffle with police after they were stopped from carrying an anti-CAA march towards Parliament.

The protest call was given by the Jamia Coordination Committee (JCC), an organisation of Jamia students and alumni.

Despite repeated appeals from the police and the varsity authorities, the protesters refused to end their agitation. Police said the protesters did not have permission to march towards Parliament.

Amid heavy deployment of security personnel in and around the university, the protesters, including several women, began their march from Jamia's gate no 7.

The protesters raised slogans like "Kagaz Nahi Dikhayenge" (We will not show documents)

and "Jab Nahi Dare Hum Goron Se Toh Kyun Dare Hum Auron Se" (When we did not fear the British, why should we fear others).

Men formed a human chain on either sides of roads as women walked ahead, waving the tricolour and raising slogans of "Halla Bol".

"It has been two months since we are protesting. No one from the government has come to talk to us, so we want to go to talk to them," said burqadad Zeba Anhad.

A scuffle ensued as policemen tried to stop the protesters. Many of them jumped over barricades to continue their march towards Parliament.

Jamia Millia Islamia proctor Waseem Ahmed Khan appealed to the students to disperse and not meddle with the police. "The message has been sent. I request students

in the crowd to go back to the university. Respect the law and peacefully go back," he urged the students.

The CAA allows easier citizenship for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Parsis and Jains who came to India from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh before 2015 to escape religious persecution there.

Those opposing the CAA contend that it discriminates on the basis of religion and violates the Constitution. They also allege that the CAA along with the NRC is intended to target the Muslim community in the country.

However, the central government has dismissed the allegations, maintaining that the law is intended to give citizenship to the persecuted minorities from the three neighbouring countries and not to take away anyone's citizenship.

Gargi Mayhem: Police File FIR, Anguished Students Stage Protest

NEW DELHI:- Four days after a group of men broke into the all-women Gargi College and allegedly groped, harassed and molested students, Delhi Police on Monday registered a complaint as hundreds of students protested demanding strict action against the intruders.

The outrage of Gargi students following the attacks during their college festival Revirie on February 6 found wide echo with students from other colleges sharing their anguish, political parties speaking out and the issue being raised in Parliament.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal termed the incident "extremely unfortunate" while Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said those involved in the act were outsiders and the college administration has been asked to take strict action against them.

The Delhi units of the BJP and the Congress united on a common platform with both asking that the culprits be arrested at the earliest.

Delhi Commission for Women Swati Malival also reached the college, in the Siri Fort area in the heart of south Delhi, to take stock of the situation. The DCV issued a notice the college and

the Delhi Police for "inaction".

Fighting allegations that the college administration turned a deaf ear to their complaints and did nothing, Gargi College Principal Promila Kumar said a general body meeting was held with the students and the matter amicably resolved.

"The college has filed a police complaint and has also set up an internal inquiry committee to look into the matter and speak to complainants. The police have begun their probe and are collecting footage," she told PTI.

The students alleged that the men, in their 30s and drunk, groped and dragged girls and performed obscene acts, while security and Delhi Police personnel stood by like mute spectators.

Reliving the nightmare of the men gatecrashing into what they considered their safe space, a student said there was complete lapse of security.

"The students were groped, molested and even assaulted by the men. The college claimed to have made security arrangements. I don't think such an incident has taken place on any college campus across the country," she said.

Requesting anonymity, a political science student added

that some men jumped over the gates while others jumped over walls.

"They were drunk and went berserk. Some girls ran towards washrooms, but the men followed them and locked them inside," she added.

The students alleged that they were threatened by the intruders, who also made objectionable remarks and used cuss words.

They also claimed that auto drivers, who had parked their vehicles outside the main gate of the college, also entered the campus.

"The college had hired bouncers for security. The security personnel were also standing right there and watching it all. My friend, who was molested, rushed to a security guard and pleaded him for help but he did not move," a student said.

Their ordeal aggravated after the college refused to take cognisance of the incident, the students alleged.

"The next day, on February 7, we took up the matter with teachers and the college management. The management said they had taken note of it. They didn't promise to take any action, after which many students shared their horrific experiences on Instagram," a B.Sc student added.

'Can 4-Month-Old Participate In Protest?' SC After Infant's Death At Shaheen Bagh



NEW DELHI:- "Can a 4-month-old child be taking part in such (Shaheen Bagh) protests?", the Supreme Court asked on Monday while warning some women lawyers for making "explosive submissions" that children participating in these anti-CAA demonstrations are being called names, 'terrorist', 'gaddar' (traitor), 'Pakistani', in school.

"Don't make explosive submissions. Please do not make such statements. We do not want people to use this platform to further create problems," said a bench, comprising Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices B R Gavai and Surya Kant, when two women advocates instantly started making submissions.

When the bench said it was taking suo motu cognizance of the letter written by a national bravery award winner Zen Gun-ratan Sadavarte, seeking that minors be barred from participating in any type of protest and agitation, the advocates interrupted claiming that children participating in the protest are being called names, 'terrorist', 'gaddar' (traitor), 'Pakistani', in schools.

"They (children) come home crying," they submitted.

The intervention by advocates Shahrukh Alam and Nandita Rao, did not go down well with the bench, which said: "We will not hear you on this. Don't make such types of irrelevant arguments."

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta opposed them saying, "Can it be a ground for sitting on dharna with a four-month-old child or can they oppose this on the ground that children are being called names like gaddars in school."

The bench asked, "A four-month old infant had gone to protest? But tell us which four-month-old child goes on its own to protest sites."

Advocate Alam said she was ap-

pearing for mother of two daughters and given that India has ratified UN Conventions on children's right to protest it was not appropriate for the apex court suo motu taking up the matter.

The bench said the two lawyers were deviating from the main issue of which it has taken cognizance of.

"We are not considering either CAA or NRC. We are not considering the abuses like Pakistani hurled in schools," the bench said.

The bench made it clear that it was not stifling anybody's voice.

"We are not stifling any voice. This is a properly constituted suo motu proceedings by the Supreme Court of India," the bench said.

"We have the highest respect for motherhood, and highest concern for children. Don't make arguments to raise and create guilt," the bench said.

"A child has died. Instead of causing more trouble, mothers should back this cause," the bench said.

The lawyers had submitted that "these women (who are sitting at protest site) live in slums and have no option but to take their children along to the protest site".

"The right of children to protest is also recognised under the UN convention...and children are brought along to fairs, jag-ratas etc where also they could be at a risk of some harm", Alam submitted.

The two women lawyers said they were seeking intervention on behalf of journalist and activist John Dayal and the mother of two children.

The 4-month-old baby had passed away in his sleep on the night of January 30 after returning from Shaheen Bagh where his parents had taken him during the anti-CAA protest.

Shaheen Bagh Protesters Can't Block Roads Or Cause Public Inconvenience: SC



The apex court issued notices to the Centre, Delhi government and the police on the pleas seeking removal of protesters from Shaheen Bagh.

"There is a law and people have grievance against it. The matter is pending in court. Despite that some people are protesting. They are entitled to protest," a bench comprising justices S K Kaul and K M Joseph said.

"You cannot block the public

roads. There cannot be indefinite period of protest in such an area. If you want to protest, it has to be in an area identified for protest," the bench said.

The apex court further said that the protest at Shaheen Bagh is going on for long but it cannot create inconvenience for others.

The bench said it would not pass any direction without hearing the other side and posted the matter for February 17.

NEWS MAKERS

Hardik Patel untraceable since Jan 18, claims wife

AHMEDABAD:- Gujarat Congress leader and Patidar quota agitation spearhead Hardik Patel is untraceable since January 18 when he was arrested in a 2015 sedition case, his wife Kinjal said on Monday.

Patel, who is facing sedition cases related to the 2015 Patidar quota agitation, was arrested on January 18 this year after a court here issued a non-bailable warrant for not being present during hearing. He was granted bail four days later but was

again picked up in connection with two other cases filed in Patan and Gandhinagar districts.

Patel got bail in these two cases on January 24. However, a trial court issued a non-bailable warrant on February 7 after he once again failed to appear for a hearing.

"Hardik Patel has been untraceable since he was arrested on January 18. Though we do not know where he is, the police frequently comes to our residence to ask me about his whereabouts," said Kinjal at an event organised by Patidar quota leaders.

The meeting of Patidar leaders was organised here to put pressure on the state government to withdraw around 1,500 cases lodged against people who took part in the quota agitation in 2015 and before the 2017 Gujarat Assembly polls.

In all, Patel faces over 20 cases registered against him across Gujarat after he led the Patidar quota stir in 2015.

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Indigo Pilot Suspended For 3 Months For Threatening Wheelchair-Bound Senior Citizen In Flight

NEW DELHI:- Aviation regulator DGCA on Monday suspended an IndiGo captain for three months for "intimidating and threatening" a wheelchair-bound senior citizen in a Chennai-Bengaluru flight on January 13, an official said.

During investigation, it was found that the pilot-in-command "insisted" on an apology letter from the passengers -- the senior citizen and her daughter -- which further delayed the matter, detaining them for approximately 75 minutes after the

deboarding began at the Bengaluru airport.

"It was established that the pilot-in-command's attitude towards the wheelchair-bound senior citizen passenger was intimidating, threatening and lacked compassion. The DGCA has suspended his license for a period of three months," the official added.

Independent journalist Supriya Unni Nair, who had asked for a wheelchair for her 75-year-old mother after landing in Bengaluru on January 13 night, had narrated the

incident in multiple tweets.

According to Nair's tweets, the cabin crew stated that they do not have access to wheelchair assistance.

Seeing the commotion on this issue, the pilot-in-command came in between, misbehaving and threatening Nair and her mother with jail, Nair had said.

Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri wrote on Twitter on January 14, "I requested my office to contact IndiGo as soon as I saw the tweet by Ms Supriya Unni Nair about the pi-

lot's behaviour with her & her 75 year old mother in need of wheelchair assistance."

"The airline has informed Ministry of Civil Aviation that the pilot has been off-rostered pending full enquiry," he added.

On Monday, the DGCA official said their investigation found that the captain threatened Nair and her mother by saying they will be handed over to the CISF and a police case will be registered against them for "unruly behaviour".

"The pilot exhibited aggression towards the lady passengers in his dealings while disregarding the fact that the elderly passenger required wheelchair assistance," the official added.

The investigation found that the captain's actions led to "avoidable detention" of a wheelchair-bound passenger.

"He exhibited lack of ability in managing threat and error situation, especially when he was to operate another commercial flight after a short duration," the official added.