

Shaheen Bagh: Sc Names Mediators For Venue Change



NEW DELHI:- The Supreme Court on Monday said it is troubling to see protesters blocking the road as it may set a bad precedent, and suggested that the protest may shift to an alternate venue.

The top court also appointed three interlocutors led by senior advocate Sanjay Hegde to talk to the Shaheen Bagh protesters regarding change in the protest site, and file report in court.

A bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Justice K.M. Joseph, citing replication of protests involving blocking of public roads, said: "We are concerned, what will happen if people start hitting the streets and blocking the roads while protesting...it is a concern."

The court suggested that the Delhi Police may also offer an alternative site to the protesters at Shaheen Bagh. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta contended before the court that protesters can't continue blocking roads on grounds of not getting an alternative site.

To this, the court replied: "It is fundamental right of people to protest and people can protest."

Mehta also contended that the message that every institution has been kneeling and praying to the protesters should not go out.

"For some reasons, you have not gone there. If nothing works out, we will leave it to you," the bench told Mehta, who insisted that talks were held with welfare and market associations to lift restrictions on road.

The court also observed that the authorities should favourably consider this aspect of right to protest. The other two interlocutors on the matter are advocate Sadhna Ramachandran and former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah.

The apex court observed that it is not saying that people have no right to protest against a law while the matter is pending in the top court, but the question is where to protest.

The apex court has scheduled next hearing on the matter on February 24.



Delhi HC Notice To Centre On Plea In Jamia Violence

NEW DELHI:- The Delhi High Court on Monday issued notices on a petition filed by a Jamia Millia Islamia student seeking compensation of Rs 2 crore for injuries he sustained during December 15 violence.

In the petition, student named Shayan Mujeeb asserted that he received injuries after the protest against Citizenship (Amendment) Act turned violent.

Mujeeb contended that he

spent over Rs 2.5 Lakh on medical treatment.

The court issued notices to Central government and Delhi Police on his petition. They have to submit their response by May 27.

The counsel, appearing for Mujeeb, told the court that his client has fractured both his legs and will limp for life. The Centre, however, objected to his claim.

"There is a CCTV footage for the library," the counsel re-

torted.

Protests against the newly-enacted Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) had turned violent on December 15 near Delhi's Jamia Nagar.

As many as 14 buses were burnt and 20 private vehicles were torched in that violence.

Sixty seven people, including 31 police officers, sustained injuries and a total of 47 persons, including students, were detained.

India Deployed P-8I Naval Jets To Keep Eye On Chinese Troops During Doklam Face-Off



NEW DELHI:- Indian Navy's Poseidon 81 anti-submarine warfare aircraft was deployed to carry out surveillance on movement of Chinese troops during the 73-day-long standoff between India and China in mountainous Doklam.

Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat confirmed the use of the naval aircraft while talking about the need for bringing in tri-services synergy in dealing with national security challenges.

"The P-8I aircraft of Indian Navy was deployed in Doklam (during the face-off)," Gen Rawat told a group of journalists.

Troops of India and China were locked in a standoff in Doklam from June 16, 2017 after the Indian side stopped the building of a road in the disputed area by the Chinese Army.

The face-off triggered fears of a war between the two neighbours. The standoff ended on August 28, 2017 after over 10 rounds of talks between diplomats of the two sides.

The P-8Is were also deployed

to keep an eye on movement of Pakistani troops after the Pulwama terror attack last year.

"The P-8I aircraft were the most potent platform to carry out surveillance -- be it sea or mountains. The aircraft were live-streaming data to support decision making during the Doklam face-off," said defence expert Capt D K Sharma (retd).

Sharma said deployment of the P-8Is signified synergy among the Army and the Navy in dealing with the major crisis.

The P-8I, based on the Boeing next-generation 737 commercial airplane, is a variant of the P-8A Poseidon used by the US Navy.

India was Boeing's first international customer for this aircraft. The first P-8I aircraft was inducted into the Indian Navy in 2013 and, at present, it has a fleet of eight P 8Is.

In 2016, the defence ministry had placed a follow-on order for four additional P-8I, the delivery of which will begin by April 2020.

Last year the government cleared procurement of another batch of six P-8Is.

Shaheen Bagh Protest: Blockade Of Public Road Troubling Us, Says SC

NEW DELHI:- Blockade of public road at Shaheen Bagh is "troubling us", the Supreme Court said on Monday and suggested that the anti-CAA protesters go to another site where no public place would be blocked.

The apex court asked senior advocate Sanjay Hegde to "play a constructive role as an interlocutor" to persuade the protesters to move to an alternative site.

People have a fundamental right to protest "peacefully and lawfully" but blocking public roads and places is a matter of concern as it might lead to "chaotic situation", the apex court said, stressing that there has to be a "balancing factor".

"Democracy works on expression of views but there are lines and boundaries for it," a bench of Justices S K Kaul and K M Joseph said, adding, "The question which is arising is where to protest."

"Our concern is if everybody starts blocking public areas then where will it end," the bench asked, while hearing pleas seeking removal of protesters from Shaheen Bagh and ensuring smooth traffic flow in the area.

"There must be a balancing factor," the bench said, adding, "Blocking of public road is troubling us".

It said Hegde can take assistance of advocate Sadhana Ramachandran and former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah for talking to the protesters.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Delhi government and Delhi Police, told the court that the solution is to remove these protesters from the site.

"We will not go that far but the problem is that they (protesters) are keeping children and women as shield. We have held a series of meetings with the local resident welfare associations, priests of mosques there and we are trying to persuade them that this is not the way to keep entire city to hostage under the garb of protest," Mehta said.

When the bench asked Hegde



to talk to protesters, Mehta said, "Let a message not go that every institution is kneeling on its knees in trying to persuade them... I do not want a message to go that we are praying to them to remove".

The bench, however, observed, "We want to solve the problem and we have expressed our opinion. If nothing works, we will leave it to the authorities to deal with the situation".

The bench also asked Mehta whether an alternative site can be given to the protesters to hold their agitation.

"It is unfortunate that we have to make designated area for protests like Jantar Mantar. We have so many professional protesters," Mehta said.

"It is important to allow people to protest," the bench said, adding, "The right to protest is recognised world over, more particularly in India. There is a fundamental right to assemble peacefully to protest".

At the outset, the bench said people or any section of the society have a right to protest against a law and they also have the right to express their grievance against it.

"Whether traffic flow can be managed from here or there is not the issue. Today, it is protest against a legislation. Tomorrow, there may be protest against different legislation. The issue is if people start blocking roads and public places, what will happen then," the

bench said and posted the matter for hearing on February 24.

The bench also dealt with an intervention application filed by Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Azad and two others, including Habibullah.

The counsel appearing for the intervenors told the court that protest has been going on and it is not that people of only one faith are agitating there.

The bench said a "lot of heat" has been generated on the issue and protesters have made their point as the agitation is going on for quite some time.

When the bench was informed that children were not able to go to schools due to the protest, the bench said, "There must be a balancing factor. You may protest, may be, somewhere else. If this (blockade of public place during protests) applies to other places, this may lead to chaos".

"Somebody who may not be on the same page as you may get an idea to start a protest somewhere else? Then where do we end?" the bench said adding, the people may "emulate" Shaheen Bagh also.

"It is not a pleasant task which we have taken upon ourselves," the bench said, adding, "It should have been done by the executive".

The top court also said in an age of social media, there is a tendency for anyone to go overboard.

When the bench asked Hegde to talk to protesters, the senior advocate said he would be glad to assist retired apex court judge Justice Kurian Joseph on this.

Nirbhaya Convicts To Be Hanged On March 3, Mother Happy



NEW DELHI:- The four death-row convicts in the Nirbhaya gang-rape and murder case will now be hanged on March 3 at 6 a.m., a local court announced here on Monday.

Additional Sessions Judge Dharmendra Rana pronounced the order on a petition seeking issuance of fresh date for the execution of death warrants in the case pertaining to the gang-rape and murder of a 23-year-old woman in the national capital in December 2012.

Expressing satisfaction over the latest court order, Nirbhaya's mother said, "I'm satisfied and

happy. I hope the convicts will finally be hanged on March 3," Asha Devi told mediapersons.

The case pertains to the gang-rape and murder of a 23-year-old girl in the national capital in December 2012.

On January 31, a trial court had stayed "till further order" the execution of the four convicts -- Mukesh Kumar Singh (32), Pawan Gupta (25), Vinay Kumar Sharma (26) and Akshay Kumar (31).

Of the four convicts, Pawan has not yet availed the remedy of either curative petition or mercy plea.

Sharjeel Imam Sent To Police Custody In Jamia Violence Case

NEW DELHI:- A Delhi court on Monday sent Sharjeel Imam, a JNU student facing sedition charges, to one day police remand so that his involvement in December 15 violence in Jamia Millia Islamia could be probed.

Imam has been arrested by the Delhi Police Crime Branch in connection with the case.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) Gurmohina Kaur sent him to remand after another accused in the case told the police that he was provoked by Sharjeel's speeches.

Protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) had

turned violent on December 15 near Delhi's Jamia Nagar. Several buses were set afire during the violence in which police and protesters sustained injuries.

He was also slapped with a sedition case last month for allegedly making inflammatory speeches against the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC).

He is accused of mobilising students and is currently in judicial custody in connection with the case.

In a purported video, Imam was seen talking about splitting the North-East from India to block the implementation of the NRC.

Ban On Women Command Roles Not Sustainable In Law: SC



NEW DELHI:- The Supreme Court on Monday said the non-consideration of women for criteria or command appointments by the army couldn't be sustained in law, and it also didn't agree with the guarantee of equality under Article 14 of the Constitution.

The Centre had argued that women by the nature of their biological composition and social milieu had a less important role to play compared with men. Terming it "disturbing", a Bench, comprising Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and Justice Ajay Rastogi, said, "It ignores the solemn constitutional values, which every institution in the nation is bound to uphold and facilitate. Women army officers have brought laurels to the force."

The Supreme Court cited eleven instances where women officers had achieved distinction. It included Captain Tania Shergill, who became the first Indian woman parade adjutant to lead an all-men contingent of the Corps of Signals

at the Republic Day parade; Lieutenant Colonel Sophia Qureshi (Army Signal Corps), the first woman to lead an Indian Army contingent at a multi-national military exercise named 'Exercise Force 18'; Lieutenant Colonel Anuvandana Jaggi, who served as the women team leader of the UN Military Observers Team in Burundi; women officers with complex tasks of transporting 30-50 vehicles' convoys in militancy-prone areas of Leh, Srinagar, Udhampur and the north-east; and women officers' participation in the UN Peace Keeping Force since 2004 and their deployment in active combat scenarios in Syria, Lebanon, Ethiopia and Israel.

"Their track record of service to the nation is beyond reproach. The time has come for a realisation that women army officers are not adjuncts to a male-dominated establishment whose presence must be 'tolerated' within narrow confines," observed the top court.

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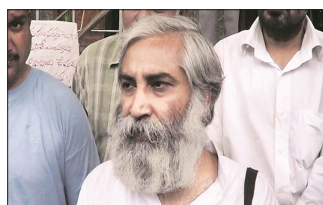
Magsaysay Award Winner Held On Way To Anti-CAA Protest

LUCKNOW:- Magsaysay Award winner, Sandeep Pandey, was arrested here on Monday afternoon while he was going to participate in an anti-CAA protest.

Nine others persons who were accompanying Pandey have also been arrested and brought to the Thakurganj police station.

According to reports, Pandey and his associates had reached the Clock Tower and were planning to take out a march to the other protest site in Ujariyaganon village in Gomti Nagar area.

Thakurganj Station House Officer (SHO) Pramod Kumar said



that they had been arrested under Section 151 (knowingly joining or continuing in assembly of five or more persons after it has been commanded to disperse), in apprehension of breach of peace.

The SHO said that Pandey and his associates were also distributing pamphlets against CAA

Taj all set to welcome Trump

AGRA:- The dry and polluted river Yamuna at the rear of the Taj Mahal is the biggest concern for the Uttar Pradesh administration engaged in organising a grand welcome to US President Donald Trump, his wife Melania and delegation members who will arrive at the Kheria airport on February 24.

When Donald Trump visits the Taj Mahal, what would be the first likely question that he could ask -- "Is the Taj yellowing due to pollution? Is this a river or a sewage drain?"

The senior officials are preparing to answer these questions to present a positive

profile of the state and union government that claims to have addressed the twin problem of river pollution and air pollution.

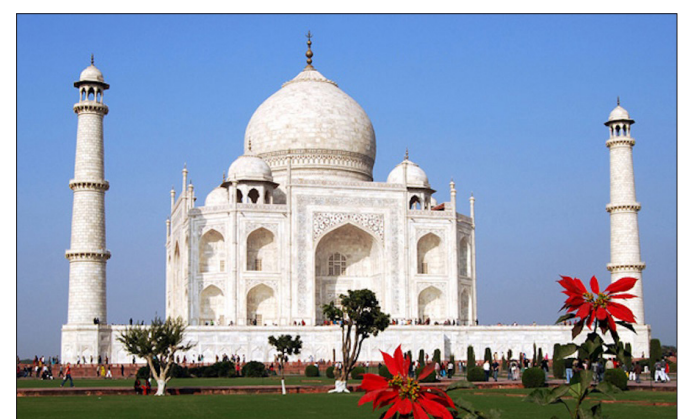
Learning from past experience, especially the visit to the city by the then US President Bill Clinton, who is believed to have called Agra a "ghost city", as the streets and the main Mall road were sealed and sanitized to present a deserted look, the district authorities have decided to line up students with flags on both sides of the road during the Trump visit.

At several points stages will be erected for local artistes to present cultural programmes. US intelligence agency person-

nel alongwith senior state officials have already had a series of interactions. A senior official said more than 5,000 police personnel will line up the main VIP road from Kheria airport's Ajit Nagar gate to the eastern gate of the Taj Mahal.

A policeman at every one metre is the plan. A major part of the main VIP road passes through the Agra Cantonment area. The military police will man this stretch of the road.

Houses and shops have been listed. Till Sunday evening credentials of more than 3,000 shops and houses had been checked. The municipal corporation of



Agra has mobilized an army of 'safai karamcharies' and anti-encroachment demolition squad comprising retired soldiers.

Over the last two days, the squad has been demolishing all ramps and encroachments on the

Fatehabad road. Hoardings and sign boards have been removed causing anger and heart burns.

The ones at the receiving end of the sudden action have protested but nothing much has come of it due to the presence of security forces.