

Senior Home Ministry Official Meets LG Murmu

JAMMU: Union Additional Secretary for Home Affairs Gyanesh Kumar met Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor G C Murmu here on Thursday and discussed the prevailing security scenario in the Union Territory, an official spokesman said.

Kumar met Murmu at the Raj

Bhavan and the two discussed wide-ranging issues related to the present security scenario in Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesman said.

Senior Vice President and Group Head of Axis Bank Vivek Bimbrawh, functionaries of NBCC India Limited headed by Yogesh Sharma, and Engineering

Export Promotion Council (EEPC) India's Regional Director Rakesh Suraj also called on Murmu separately, the spokesman said.

Bimbrawh briefed the Lt Governor about the functioning of Axis Bank and various services being provided by the bank to its customers in J&K, the spokesman said.

He said Murmu observed that the entire banking sector has a key role to play in maintaining a healthy economy and stressed on the importance of ensuring close monitoring of the fiscal health of the bank.

Sharma briefed the Lt Governor about the status of work being

undertaken by NBCC in the UT, the spokesman said, adding Murmu asked the NBCC functionaries to adopt innovative approach, besides ensuring the adherence to the highest standards of quality and timely delivery in all of their ongoing and future projects.

He said Suraj informed the Lt

Governor about various activities undertaken by EEPC for the promotion of engineering goods.

He also submitted a proposal for organizing 50th EEPC India Regional Award for Export Excellence in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesman said.

The Lt Governor while interact-

ing with the Regional Director observed that the UT administration is taking several initiatives and putting a sustained focus on industrial development and investment promotion to attract the best of investment opportunity in the industry for the business expansion in J&K, the spokesman said.

JU Students Polls: Pro-Left Groups Retain Control, ABVP Makes Presence Felt

KOLKATA: (PTI) Pro-Left student bodies swept union elections in the Jadavpur University, even as the ABVP, which contested the polls at the institute for the first time, secured the second spot in one of the faculties.

Left and ultra-Left student organisations retained their hold in all the three faculties of the university where elections were held on Wednesday after a gap of three years.

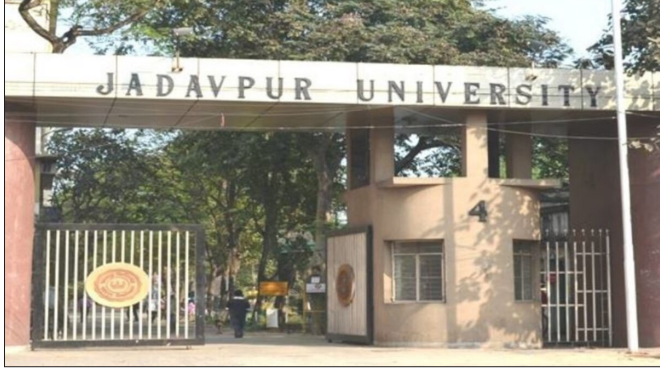
After the results were announced on Thursday, a university official said the Democratic Students' Federation (DSF) won all the five central panel seats in Engineering faculty.

The We The Independents (WTI), another ultra-Left student outfit, retained its control in the Science faculty securing all four central panel seats.

The SFI, student wing of the CPI(M), won with massive leads in all the four central panel seats in Arts faculty.

Each central panel has posts of a chairperson, a general secretary and two or three assistant general secretaries.

In a significant development,



the ABVP which contested for the first time in the JU, known as a hotbed of Left-wing politics, secured the second spot in Engineering faculty relegating the SFI to the third spot.

While the DSF bagged 3,304 votes, the ABVP got 508 votes. The SFI and the TMCP secured 288 and 77 votes respectively, the official said.

DSF leader Abhik said, "The election results showed that students of JU will never allow any divisive forces to spread their ideology of hatred in the campus."

The RSS-affiliated ABVP, al-

though failed to open its account, was happy to be in the second spot.

"We have come up second in Engineering by winning over 500 votes. This is our biggest gain," an ABVP leader said.

The Trinamool Chatra Parishad (TMCP), students' wing of the ruling TMC, not only failed to open an account in any of the faculties but was relegated to the distant fourth spot.

position.

Just like Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University, Kolkata's Jadavpur University is considered to be a Leftist bastion.

Shaheen Bagh: Talks Between Protesters And Interlocutors Make Little Headway

NEW DELHI: Talks between the Supreme Court-appointed interlocutors and protesters to vacate the road at Shaheen Bagh made little headway on Thursday as the anti-CAA agitators remained firm on continuing with their sit-in at the site.

They told the interlocutors that once the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens are rolled back, they will not only vacate the road but also clean it.

Senior lawyers Sanjay Hegde and Sadhana Ramachandran, the apex court-appointed interlocutors who reached the site in the afternoon on the second consecutive day, were not willing to start the discussion in the presence of media.

When the protestors managed to convince the interlocutors to let the media cover the proceedings, a media personnel's remark irked them. The interlocutors subsequently asked the media to leave the tent where discussions were on.

The discussion lasted for nearly three hours.

Ramachandran began addressing the protesters saying, "We have come here for you. We have to think over it and talk in detail.

We are thankful that yesterday we received blessings from all dadis."

She also appealed to the protesters to find another way to continue with the protest that does not cause inconvenience to others.

A crowd of over 100 men and women were not convinced. They unanimously replied in the negative.

Hegde too tried to persuade them. He said the apex court has recognised their right to protest.

"We cannot do a 'my way or the highway here'. We need two hands to clap. If we get adamant and tomorrow if there is a bigger issue and lawmakers put their foot down and do not listen..."

Hegde said other citizens of the city also need to work, travel and feed their families.

"When Shaheen Bagh has become an example of protests in India then let us set an example of a protest that doesn't disturb anybody. You all must be rest assured that we are here to fight for you. Don't think that if you change your spot, your fight will die down," Hegde said.

"We have seen many prime ministers come and go. Whoever

comes in power and runs the country...sometimes they could be right or wrong. Whatever you are saying the whole country is listening and also the prime minister," he added.

On Monday, the Supreme Court observed that the blockade of the road at Shaheen Bagh was "troubling" and suggested the protesters go to another site where no public place would be blocked. It, however, upheld their right to protest.

The apex court also asked Hegde to "play a constructive role as an interlocutor" to persuade the protesters to move to an alternative site. It said the interlocutors could seek former bureaucrat Wajahat Habibullah's assistance.

The protesters -- many turning emotional or angry -- shared their grievances with the interlocutors on Thursday.

A man broke down while talking to the interlocutors.

"I am very scared...very scared of what will happen to my children. Madam save us," he said.

The interlocutors asked him what he is scared of, to which he replied, "I am a single father. My girls go to

school where they are being told that you will go out of the country."

Another man, while talking to them, said, "I have a national flag on my bicycle. We love this country and stop calling us traitors." His daughter who appeared to be below 10 years old told mediators, "I am a young girl and I want a beautiful India."

Ramchandran repeatedly tried to address their concerns.

"Who says NRC and CAA can't be rolled back? The Supreme Court will decide on this. You have all the right to seek rollback of this legislation. However until then one cannot remain adamant and say that they won't move until the decision is taken."

As the session went on without any solution, the protesters started losing their patience and some of them even shouted slogans which upset the interlocutors.

At one point, Ramchandran told one of the protesters to leave the venue and said, "The atmosphere here is not right for a discussion. The women should select a spot where 10 to 12 women can come in a group to talk to us."

Cross-Border Infiltration,

on their rhetoric and activities. FATF is a factor in the reduction of militant activities in Kashmir Valley," he added.

Pakistan may have to rethink strategy as even China realised they cannot back their all-weather friend all the time, the Army chief said on the FATF plenary.

A sub-group of the global terror financing watchdog FATF on Tuesday recommended continuation of Pakistan in the 'Grey List' for its failure to check militant funding.

"There are at least 15-20 terrorist camps inside Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir where there are around 250-350 terrorists at any given time and numbers may fluctuate," the Army Chief said.

He said that Indian armed forces were getting inputs and have been able to foil (Pakistan Army's) BAT action attempts even before they have been able to launch them.

When asked on the health condition of Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the army chief only said security forces are geared up to take care of any situation.

On the proposed creation of a theatre command exclusively for J&K, he said there will be detailed discussions before anything is finalised.

Naravane said the force has been championing gender equality and the Supreme Court order granting permanent commission to women officers will give it a lot of clarity moving forward.

Welcoming Supreme Court's order that women officers in the Army be granted permanent commission and command postings, the Army Chief said that Indian Army does not discriminate any soldier based on religion, caste, creed, or even gender.

"The outlook of the Indian Army has been throughout like this and that is why we started inducting women officers as early as in 1993," Gen Naravane added.

Attempts Being Made To Disrupt

being made by elements across the border to create trouble here," DGP said while addressing a joint security review meeting with Rajiv Rai Bhatnagar, the advisor to Lt. Governor of J&K, in south Kashmir today.

The DGP, while addressing the meeting, complimented the police personnel, security forces and intelligence agencies for achieving highest degree of synergy and coordination and efficiently handling the internal security situation in south Kashmir.

Bhatnagar reiterated the vital importance of maintaining a close watch on the inimical elements and stressed on the need to maintain real-time coordination between the different security agencies.

He also appreciated the J&K Police and other forces in maintaining peace and stability in south Kashmir.

The advisor asked the officers to enhance their investigation skills on modern lines and also laid stress on the preventive measures to minimise crime rate.

Kashmir's Upper Reaches Receive

its district headquarter Bandipora, where rain lash the town today.

Fresh snowfall was also experienced at holy Amarnath cave shrine and its periphery, Panjterni, Sheshnag, Mahaguns and Pisso top on traditional yatra route. The minimum

temperature at Pahalgam was minus 0.4 degree while the maximum temperature was 7 degree.

Fresh snowfall was also received at Pir-ki-Gali, on historic Mughal road, and other upper reaches in Shopian and Kulgam districts in south Kashmir. However, plains received rain since early this morning affecting normal life.

Tourist resort of Yusmarg and other upper reaches in central Kashmir district of Budgam also received few inches of fresh snowfall since early this morning.

Rain since this morning affected normal life in summer capital, Srinagar, where the minimum temperature surged due to cloudy sky during the night. Met spokesman said minimum temperature was 3.6 degree, which was 2.7 notches above normal. It remained below normal yesterday.

Met spokesman said the sky would be partly cloudy and there could be rain or snow in Srinagar during the next 24 hours when the maximum and minimum temperatures would be 12 degree and 2 degree respectively during the next 24 hours.

He said temperature at border town of Kargil was not available while minimum temperature at Leh was minus 6.3 degree. The sky would be partly cloudy and rain or snow is predicted during the next 24 hours in Leh, where the maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 8 degree and minus 7 degree respectively during the next 24 hours.

British MP Debbie Ran Sustained

an e-Business visa.

"Even if we presume that she had a visa, that was issued for a business ETA and business ETA cannot be used for a primary purpose of meeting family and friends," he said.

Abrahams, who has been a vocal critic of the Indian government's abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, posted what looks like an e-visa document on Twitter to show that she had a visa issued on October 7 last year, which was valid until October 5, 2020.

However, government sources had said Abrahams' e-Business visa was revoked as she was involved in anti-India activities, and the cancellation was conveyed to her on February 14.

Rs 3L For the Kashmiri Students'

take on those who oppose the country," Swami says in the video.

Talib Majeed, Basit Asif Sofi and Amir Mohiuddin Wani, studying at KLE Institute of Technology in Hubballi district of Karnataka were arrested last Saturday for allegedly raising pro-Pakistan slogans and posting a video on social media. The trio hailing from Shopian district of Valley were let off next day after they executed a bond under 169 CrPC. However, hours later they were rearrested after rightwing organisations staged protests against their release.

The Sri Ram Sene had until recently focused its attention on violent moral policing, especially around the time of Valentines Day celebrations on February 14. In 2009, its members gained special notoriety after they chased, slapped and dragged by the hair several women in Mangaluru who had gone to a pub, The Wire report added. All four accused were acquitted.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka High Court today directed the Hubli Commissioner of Police to ensure protection for the advocates who wish to represent the three Kashmiri students, Indian legal website Bar and Bench reported.

The Hubli Bar Association had recently passed a resolution stating that no member shall plead the case of the three students. This prompted a group of 24 advocates to file a petition before the Karnataka High Court challenging the resolution.

The Bar and Bench report said that a Division Bench of Chief Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka and Justice Hemant Chandangoudar today remarked, "How can the Bar Association pass such a resolution ... By passing such a resolution they are obstructing court work. Are they carrying out a mini trial by themselves?"

Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Oka further stated that, "We will ensure that they (advocates who wish to represent the accused) are able to file bail applications for the accused."

The Court observed that the resolution passed is wholly illegal and against the traditions of the Bar. Moreover, the resolution is against the constitutional right of accused persons to have an advocate of their choice represent them, the Court observed.

In this regard, the Court urged the Hubli Bar Association to reconsider its resolution, as it appeared to be "ex-facie" against the mandate of law. The Court also pointed out that the Bar Association was bound by the Constitutional mandate and additionally, its members are bound by professional ethics envisaged in the Bar Council of India Rules.

However, if the Bar Association does not reconsider its resolution, the Court would be compelled to examine its legality, the Bench forewarned.

The Court further directed the petitioners to implead the office bearers of the Hubli Bar Association as well, the report added.

JKSSB Approves 269 Posts

on various agenda items related to the preparation of various selection lists of five new government medical colleges (GMCs), pending court cases, pending selection lists, recommendation withheld cases of various posts and the PM package (Migrants).

He said the board examined a total of 82 selection files of various categories for new GMCs and approved 77 selection lists while deferring five selection files seeking further clarification from the Health and Medical Education Department regarding eligibility and qualification for the post.

The board also released 90 recommendations of withheld cases of various posts of different district cadre, divisional cadre Jammu, divisional cadre Kashmir, state cadre and PM Package (Migrants) and approved seven cases in pursuance of the directions of courts related to various categories of posts of pending selections, the spokesman said.

2nd Batch Of Union Ministers

part of the second batch, he said.

The ministers will assess the development initiatives undertaken by the central government as well as the UT administration on the ground and they will not talk about political issues, the official said.

By interacting with the locals, they will try to get first-hand information about the roads, healthcare facilities, power situation, functioning of academic institutions etc. in the UT, he added.

As many as 37 central ministers had visited Jammu and Kashmir last month following a directive of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who wanted an honest assessment of the

various welfare schemes being implemented there.

Among those who had visited Jammu and Kashmir were Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, ministers of state for home G Kishan Reddy and Nityanand Rai.

The Union ministers have already submitted their feedback to the PMO on the implementation of various development schemes there.

There were two sets of feedback -- one on the initiatives taken by the UT administration and the other on the Centre's initiatives -- another official said.

Most of the central ministers stayed overnight at their respective places of visit such as Baramulla, Ganderbal, Doda, besides others.

In August last year, the Centre abrogated Article 370 provisions of the Constitution, which gave a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, and bifurcated it into UTs -- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Since then, the Centre has been closely monitoring the on the ground implementation of various development programmes there.

Jammu and Kashmir is currently under the President's rule.

Civil Rights Groups Demand

to handle the administration in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The economy is in bad shape and political leaders are still under arrest. After controlling Jammu and Kashmir through the governor's rule, they still do not know where to take the Union territory. We demand that full statehood be given back to Jammu and Kashmir, articles 370 and 35A are brought back, all political leaders should be released and the internet and all such communication channels restored," she said.

Those taking part at the protest programme carried placards with slogans such as "Restore democracy, rights and dignity of Kashmiri people" and "Withdraw UAPA-Sedition-PSA on Kashmiri political leaders and citizens".

On August 5 last year, the government abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution that accorded a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated it into Union territories.

Hope Trump Talks Kashmir

between India and Pakistan during his meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

New Delhi maintains that there is no scope for any third-party mediation between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

Farooqui also said that UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres during his three-day visit to Pakistan expressed his "deep concern at the increase in tensions since last year".

She also said this week was a painful reminder of the tragedy of Samjhauta Express train that occurred 13 years ago, and the "families and the loved ones of the 68 victims of that terrorist attack still await justice."

"Pakistan would like to remind the Indian government of its responsibility to take serious and credible steps to bring the perpetrators of the Samjhauta Express blasts to justice at the earliest and without further delay," she said

Kashmir Journalist

Ahmer Khan

have been far greater, and it is to Ahmer's enormous credit that he managed to provide accurate, high-quality journalism when it was so sorely needed."

Khan said on learning of his win: "This is a real honour, and a huge motivation to carry on my work with enthusiasm and determination."

"I want to dedicate this award to the courageous and resilient journalists from Kashmir who have been reporting in extremely difficult conditions for the past six months. This is a collective award."

The Kate Webb Prize, with a 3,000 euro (USD 3,400) purse, honours journalists working in perilous or difficult conditions in Asia, and is named after a crusading AFP reporter who died in 2007 at the age of 64, after a career covering the world's troublespots.

The award, which in 2018 went to reporter Asad Hashim for his coverage of the plight of ethnic Pashtuns and blasphemy issues in his native Pakistan, is administered by AFP and the Webb family.

The prize will be formally presented at a ceremony in Hong Kong later this year. (AFP)

Top JK Officials To Meet India

national partner for the summit, they said.

The union government's moves on the vexed Kashmir issue in August have been met with mixed response, with many going public with the prolonged shutdown of telecom connectivity in the valley and the continuing detentions of political leaders, while others have welcomed the move.

At the time of the announcement, the Centre had assured that carving out union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh out of the state of Jammu and Kashmir will fasten economic development of the region through focused attention.

There were also reports of mega projects like a massive solar project in the mountainous Ladakh region being launched.

The summit in May will be a showcase of investment opportunities across sectors, officials said.

Other officials and bureaucrats, including Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, the secretary for industries and commerce; Anoo Malhotra, the director of industries and commerce; and Rohit Kansal, the principal secretary of planning development and monitoring, among others, are expected to be present on Friday.

Five Of Family Killed In Samba Accident

The official identified the deceased as Darshan Singh (70), his wife Darshan Kour (65), brother Arjun Singh (75), nephew Manjeet Singh (56) and Manjeet's son Sahib Singh (20), all residents of Jammu.

The family was returning from Punjab where they had gone to attend a pre-wedding ceremony, the official said.

Woman Dies After Hit By Army Vehicle

They also demanded strict action against the driver, eyewitnesses said.

A police official has also confirmed the incident, adding that investigation in this regard has been started.