

Our Movement at the Current Juncture

SFI
14-05-16

The indefinite hunger strike was lifted yesterday following a Delhi High Court judgment which has put a stay on all the punishments against the students and has also directed the JNU VC to respond to all the students' appeals. We salute the heroic

spirit of all those who have participated in this struggle braving scorching heat and dipping energy levels. Court has directed the administration to respond to the appeals by the students, which it has been refusing to do until now. (We must remember that the HLEC didn't respond even once to the 60-odd letters written by nearly 20 students.) This though should by means push us into complacency, for we have a daunting set of challenges in front of us. The new administration has attempted to scuttle the reservation policy (with unheard instance of forging the signatures of the student representatives) and tamper with the deprivation points model. This has happened when we are already witnessing "loot of reservation" every year (A calculation based on RTI replies filed by SFI revealed that 13.5% of reserved seats were converted into UR category.)

What does the Delhi High Court Judgment Say?

The judgment is based on the statements, undertakings and assurances given by the individuals, as well as on behalf of the JNUSU that "JNUSU as well as its affiliated bodies would withdraw their pending strike and would not indulge in any strike or dharna or agitation in future in connection with the issues before this Court and/or till the legal proceedings pending as of date between the parties attain finality. They further assure this Court that discipline on the campus shall be maintained."

This means that the decision to discontinue the hunger strike follows from the affidavits filed, which is itself a precondition of the judgment. Court has acknowledged the right of the petitioners to peacefully approach the concerned authorities. The Court has recognized the fact that appeal to the administration on the HLEC decision is pending and

hence it has stayed all the punishments. Petitioners have been given the right to appeal to the court within two weeks (of decision on the appeals), is they are not satisfied with the administration's decision.

Now, there are some points which SFI would like to raise at this juncture:

- First, an All-Org meeting was held on 13-5-16, in which it was reported that individual affidavits will be filed regarding lifting the hunger strike. It was never mentioned that affidavits are going to be filed on behalf of the JNUSU.
- Second, while we acknowledge that going to court on individual basis had become necessary since 13-5-16 was the last day to pay the fines, there is simply no rationale behind doing this on behalf of the entire union. In fact this has never been done in the history of the JNU student movement. Further, this assurance to "maintain discipline on the campus" smacks of the ruling class idea of "discipline", which in essence is "keep student movement out of the campus". We would like to make it clear such an eventuality won't be allowed to happen.
- Third, we are witnessing this trend of replacing the council meetings with AO meetings. SFI even during the course of this movement had requested the union leadership to convene council meeting to chart out the trajectory of this movement, but nothing moved apart from meek assurances. 'Ultra- democracy' might seem fashionable to some, but it can't be a substitute the democratic norms and processes which have been set by the JNUSU constitution.

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

There might be times when Compromises and adjustments become essential for the movement, which gives respite and space to gather back the energy and march back with full energy. But, what really matters is the whether or not the forces which have compromised have remained true to their goals and objectives or not. This becomes the

litmus test of all movements. JNU student movement today is faced with a situation wherein we are yet to overcome the tilt of the balance of power in favour of the administration that has characterized the post-Lyngdoh period. This can be seen in the failure in solving the long pending demands including the issue of hostel, the issue of scuttling of reservations (in all categories), the move to regressively tamper with the deprivations points model, so on and so forth. Administration has been planning to use the post - 9 February situation to further tilt the balance of power in its favor. ABVP, the loyal puppet of administration that it is, has been helping it in this endeavor. We must remember that this task of tilting the balance of political power away from the administration is an integral part of the struggle to advance the students' rights in this campus.

In this period, we are also witnessing attempts to pit one set of demands with another. The question of 'Social Justice' is being pitted with the question of 'democratic space'. While the reality remains that struggle for democratic space is essential to struggle for the 'social justice' or struggle for any other students' right for that matter. This should not

suggest that the struggle for 'social justice' is any less significant. In fact, this is absolutely essential to preserving the character and composition of the JNU student movement.

What we require today is steadfast unity. But, then Unity can't be vulgarized as an empty slogan. Unity is built, nourished and taken forward through the movement. Let us resolve to strengthen the students' unity!

The Nagpur dictated agenda of destroying and dismantling the JNU will continue unabated. What we are seeing today, is a catalytic role, which students are fulfilling in the struggle against the RSS' assault on democracy. The struggle inside JNU in this context cannot be seen in isolation of the larger assault of the Hindutva-Neoliberal combine. As this regime progresses forward, the struggle might take different shapes and different turns, but student movement will have to be aware of this fact. There are many who are seeing vanguard possibilities in the ongoing student agitations. Such dramatic extrapolation would do injustice to the actual possibilities, which the present moment offers us.

Sd/-

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100 SFI activists court arrest

Have been on strike for 31 days; seek implementation of demands

BHANU P LOHUMI
THE HINDU NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 7
Protesting against the insensitive attitude of the Himachal Pradesh University (HPU) authorities towards students' demands, as many as 100 SFI activists today courted arrest from the Scandal Point on The Mall.

In an attempt to apprise the general public of their problems, the students gathered at the Scandal Point and started raising anti-university slogans.

They highlighted their grievances and also lashed out at the university administration for not paying heed to their demands, following which they were arrested by the police and taken to the women's police station in BCS.

The students, who have been sitting on a chain hunger strike for the past 31 days to press for their 46 demands, lost their cool yesterday when Satish Kumar from the Hindi department fell unconscious and was admitted to the IGMC, Shimla.

SFI university campus president Noval Thakur said the students had been striking for the past 31 days. Even Satish's condition could not move the authori-



The activists being taken to the BCS police station in Shimla. PHOTO: AMIT KANWAR

Anger spills onto roads

- The students gathered at the Scandal Point and started raising slogans
- They said even their hunger strike had failed to move the authorities
- On Friday, one of them fell unconscious and was taken to the IGMC

Demands

- The demands include filling of 212 posts of teacher, 320 posts of non-teaching staff, restoration of the Students Central Association elections, water tankers and Wi-Fi
- The students said if the problems related to RUSA were not addressed, they would launch a statewide agitation

ties, he added.

Hostellers have been without water for the past five days. "We need water tankers and it is one of the basic demands for which we have been agitating," he said, adding that the facility of the tanker was available for the VC office. The other demands included filling of 212 posts of

teacher and 320 posts of non-teaching staff, making the report of the panel on fee hike public and restoration of the Students Central Association (SCA) elections so that the students could raise their voice. The students alleged that the basic facilities like toilets, Wi-Fi and water were not being provided to them.

They asked how the university could increase the fee by 2,500 times when the students were deprived of even the basic facilities. The students said if all the problems related to the implementation of RUSA affecting the future of about 30,000 students were not resolved, they would resort to a statewide agitation.

Let's take inspiration from the student movements across the country to take the struggle forward...

**From FTII-HCU,
HPU-JNU**

Study and Struggle Zindabad!!!

**Stand in Solidarity with
the Ongoing Movement in
Himachal Pradesh University**

on its

**39th Day
of Hunger Strike**