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Rallyists hold commuters, Jadavpur University campus hostage

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KOLKATA: The three political rallies by BJP and its affiliated organizations on Gariahat Road and Raja SC Mullick Road disrupted normal traffic again on Friday afternoon. The police said 54 supporters of ABVP were arrested when they tried to break the police cordon at the Gariahat Road-Prince Anwar Shah Road crossing. "The east-west movement, towards the Prince Anwar Shah Road connector, was disrupted for 10 minutes but north-south movement was continued through both flanks periodically. Since the BJP rally was more organized, and for which there was prior intimation, we channelled traffic both ways on the Dhakuria-bound flank from Sulekha crossing," said a Jadavpur division officer.

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It would be a great help if people who do not belong to educational institutes can please stay away from these campuses. JU is going through a traumatic ragging-related incident. Several lacunae, which may be legacy issues from past managements, have been detected. Hopefully, there will be an honest effort to rectify them. Interference from outside will not help. Everyone should keep this in mind.

The cops pushed back the ABVP supporters twice - the second time when they tried to regroup from the Selimpur side.

Residents of Jadavpur, Selimpur and Garfa said a portion of Prince Anwar Shah Road - between Jadavpur PS and Lords Bakery - was shut for traffic during leader of opposition Suvendu Adhikari's rally. Vehicles were diverted via Lake Gardens flyover and Golf Green. "Initially, buses to Dhakuria were diverted from Jadavpur PS crossing. Later, as the rally progressed, diversions took place from Golpark," said a sergeant.

"On Friday, the total disruption lasted between 45 minutes and an hour. Unlike on some other days, my grandson's poolcar kept moving. Guardians usually don't travel in the poolcar, but the driver made an exception today. Thankfully, we did not have to walk as cops gave us preference," said Kankon Pal, a Ganguly Bagan resident.

Among the ABVP members detained by cops were its national general secretary Yajnavalk Shukla and national secretary Biraj Vishwas. ABVP supporters, who took out a "Jadavpur Banchao" (Save Jadavpur) rally, were stopped near the barricade at Golpark, after which they entered into a scuffle with police. They were taken into custody after some of them tried to break the barricade and move towards the university. The BJP's Yuva Morcha also organized a rally to protest against ragging at JU. While the ABVP rally did not have any police permission, Yuva Morcha secured permission from the Calcutta High Court.

"We have been protesting against the ragging at JU and our national leaders were there on Friday. It seems the state is trying to hide something, otherwise why should they be stopped?" said Ashutosh Singh, national media convenor of ABVP. The students' body will now stage protests in other states, highlighting police action against their leaders.

"ABVP is a non-political organization that believes in nationalist ideologies. Their members are disciplined. It would not have harmed anyone had the police allowed them to take out a rally," said Suvendu Adhikari.

(With inputs from Basabdatta Sarkar)