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Governor may not report protests issue to Centre

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Raj Bhavan has decided not to report the protests against governor Arif Mohammed Khan by the SFI activists to the Centre as security lapses or breakdown of constitutional machinery, is learnt. Though all law-and-order issues, especially those against the governor who is the constitutional head of the state, are reported to the Centre, Khan is learnt to have decided not to escalate the matter in view of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The governor had been repeatedly maintaining that the Constitutional machinery in the state has collapsed following the protests and the protesters even reaching his official vehicle, causing an estimated loss of over Rs 75,000. He had also stated

that he does not need protection of the state police, alleging that their hands are tied and they are not allowed to function freely in an unbiased manner.

Had the governor reported the matter to the Centre, it would possibly have deployed any central force like the CRPF for his protection. When the then West Bengal governor (and present vice-president of the country) Jagdeep Dhankar was blocked by students when he visited the Jadavpur University, the Union home ministry had issued an order handing over the responsibility of the governor's security from the state police to the CRPF despite the state government's objections. His successor C V Ananda Bose, a CRPF protectee, went a step ahead to request the Centre to provide CRPF cover for the Raj Bhavan.

"There are no hard and fast rules. If the Centre feels that there is a security threat to the governor in the state, it can take over the security even if the state objects. Here, the governor's stand is crucial. It depends on whether he wants to report the protest incidents as security lapses and threats," a senior police officer said on condition of anonymity.

The governor has sought a report from the state government after Save University Forum, an NGO, submitted a request for declaring financial emergency in the state. The state is unlikely to give a report similar to the one filed in the HC recently explaining its financial condition in a case relating to KTDFC's guarantee issue. Even if the government gives a similar report to the governor, the Centre is unlikely to declare a financial emergency as it would mean that a state immersed in a financial crisis will have to be run by the Centre, including paying its committed expenditures.

Meanwhile, the governor is also learnt to have sought explanation from the Calicut University VC M K Jayaraj for not removing the banners erected against him, despite instructions.