

# 'RIGHT TO PROTEST DOESN'T MEAN RIGHT TO VIOLENCE'

JNU V-C **M Jagadesh Kumar**, whose 5-year term ended on Jan 26, says last year's campus violence shouldn't have happened; decisions to revise hostel fee & entrance exams format were taken to improve education standards

**F**ROM the controversial sedition charges against Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) students in 2016 to the massive protest against hostel fee hike in 2019 to the infamous campus clashes allegedly between "outsiders" and Left-wing students in 2020, **M Jagadesh Kumar's** tenure as the vice-chancellor of the university has been marred with rows. Kumar, whose five-year term as JNU V-C ended on January 26, has been allowed to continue in the office till his successor is appointed.

As he prepares to leave the campus, Kumar tells **Siddhanta Mishra** that last year's violence — when a mob entered the campus, damaged property and left many bleeding — was unfortunate and it should not have happened. He, however, sought to remind his critics about "the greater heights" that the university has achieved under his tenure — retaining the top rank among all central universities. Excerpts:

**How would you describe your tenure as the JNU V-C till now?**  
I have spent five years on the campus. We tried our best to keep the attention of the university on achieving academic excellence... Because JNU is one of the top universities in India and to retain that position requires enormous efforts — both by faculty members and students.

In any educational institution, there is nothing like 'you reached the destination', it is always 'work in progress'. As we continue to work, there would be new challenges in front of us. Hence, we always need to think of solutions to counter those challenges. The head of the institution is not the only person responsible for academic excellence. Individuals come and go, but organisations stay; it is a collective work.

**What are the major reforms required in India's higher education institutions?**

One of the major steps that the National Educational Policy (NEP) aims at doing in the higher institutions is to provide more holistic and multi-disciplinary education, and this is what we have been lacking in our universities. There are silos within the universities and students are taught in very restricted areas. In order to bring a link between the reality of a society and what students are studying, a much more interdisciplinarity system has to be introduced, and that is one of the major challenges in universities. Another thing is that we need to make our education system more innovative and creative to generate new ideas.

Students should use creative ideas and apply them to practical problems. That is what the NEP tries to aim at. But even before the policy was announced, in JNU, we had taken several steps in this regard. The other major challenge is to improve the standards of teaching and learning process in state and private universities in the country. We need to improve the process of the research system in those institutions if we want to become a self-reliant 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', only a few institutes can't do that.

**What steps has the varsity taken in this direction?**

JNU's School of Engineering is a very unique programme which no other institution in the country has. Under this programme, students are taught about core engineering in the first four years and in the fifth year, they study for a masters degree in any area of humanities and aesthetics. This kind of holistic education is required in other universities as well. Similarly, an integrated B Sc and M Sc programme in Ayurveda-biology is a good example.

A university like JNU has to play a ma-



When I got the opportunity to head JNU, I had arrived here with an intention to take the university to the next level. JNU was already a good institute, but then, we cannot be complacent with what we already have. In the last five years, we contributed to society and kept improving ourselves

## FACED THE HEAT SOON AFTER ASSUMING OFFICE

Kumar, who was made the vice-chancellor in January 2016, had his first brush with controversies just a week after his appointment when students locked horns with the administration over holding an event on February 9 against the hanging of Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru

major role in hand holding some of the varsities which are struggling.

**You said JNU is sort of a role model for other universities. But the university remained in the headlines for wrong reasons like protests and clashes, with heavy police force present on the campus. Do you think you were misunderstood by students or teachers at any point?**

Having been part of the university when I look back my last five years, I see a lot of reforms have been brought to the university — both in the academic and administrative systems. For example, we have converted entrance exams into computer-based, objective-type tests. It gives us the opportunity to increase the number of examination centres across the country and make them transparent. When we had introduced the exams the entire university welcomed the move, while the number of applications has increased by about 36 per cent.

Yes, some students and teachers had opposed the decision.

But that doesn't mean that all had objected. Similarly, some faculty staff and students had protested when we decided to put a cap on the number of students per research supervisor for MPhil and PhD courses. Currently, it's eight, which is still higher compared to other universities across the world. Now, after analysing the performance of our students and faculty members, I can safely say that it was a wise decision.

**During your tenure, students on the campus were beaten up by outsiders,**

**no classes were conducted for days, people outside even started questioning JNU's education standards. How did you react to that?**

Violence has no place on a university campus like JNU, or any other place for that matter. What happened was unfortunate and such things should not have happened at our university.

Now, if people are saying that JNU has become a place for anti-social elements, then they should also look at the greater heights that the varsity has achieved over the years. Consistently, in the last four years, JNU has been ranked as the second-best university among all educational institutions and number one among the central universities in the country.

We are aiming to open close to 100 start-ups on the campus in the next few years. JNU is always on the move, with a focus on academic excellence.

**The hike of hostel fee at JNU was one of the main issues for protest by students. Despite such a massive protest, why did you keep pushing for the reform?**

Actually, there was no hostel fee hike as such. We had simply told the students that like other universities, 'you pay for what you consume'. This was it. And there is a reason for that: our room rent is just ₹10 for double occupancy and ₹20 per month for single occupancy. Electricity charges are sky-rocketing and since the students do not have to pay the bills, they use it as they like.

There have been instances when students forgot to switch off their room heaters and locked their rooms from outside before leaving for home. In the case of

room rent, when we had told them that we would increase it from ₹10 to ₹300 per month it was well within their range. Because each research student gets a monthly stipend between ₹8,000 to ₹30,000. We were also ready to give 75 per cent concession to all the students who were coming from the low economic background and different categories. In fact, in the registration process of January 2020, almost 95 per cent of the students had paid the revised room rent. It clearly shows that the majority of the students did not mind paying the fee. Only a few students, who had created the ruckus on the campus, vandalising our server to stop the registration process, were against the revised fee structure. Everybody has a right to protest, democratically in a peaceful manner, but it is not a democratic right to stop the students physically who are ready to pay the fee.

**You said a small section of students had created the ruckus on the campus. But why did they protest? Do you think there were some motives behind that?**

As the head of the institute, my primary objective is to stand by my students and faculty members who want to involve themselves in academic activities. Those who want to create disruptions at the university should clarify their motives. For me, all students are the same. I always asked the students, who were trying to disrupt the education activities, to recognise and respect their fundamental rights, and let others do their job.

**Many students and faculty members say that you have tried to change the nature of the university forcefully. How do you respond to that?**

Let us first understand what is the nature of JNU. The nature of JNU is to encourage our students to be critical thinkers, to discuss, debate and raise questions so that new knowledge is evolved — this is one aspect. The second aspect of JNU is that it is cosmopolitan, as students from all parts of the country come here and study together. There is a diversity of thoughts. So, there is no question of changing the nature of JNU.

**Was there any instance during your tenure that forced you to think that becoming the V-C of JNU was a mistake?**

I am basically an academician, have been in the IIT system for several decades and always wanted the universities in the country to improve so that we could contribute to our society. So when I got the opportunity to head JNU, I had arrived here with that intention.

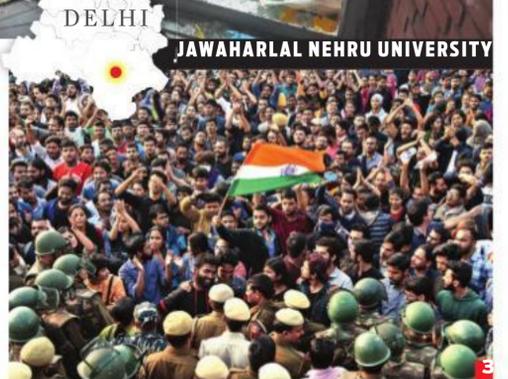
JNU was already a good institute, but then, we cannot be complacent with what we already have. In the last five years, we contributed to society and kept improving ourselves. For that, the entire credit goes to my team, the faculty and staff members for standing by me. I always look forward to improving things. I don't regret anything.

**What have you learnt from this prestigious university?**

This university gives you the opportunity to grow. There is also an immense possibility for growth of this university.

**A new statute of Swami Vivekananda was installed on the campus recently. How much of an impact does his teachings have on you?**

I am a student of Swami Vivekananda's teachings since childhood. As I grew up, I studied more about him. In today's world, while we are materialistically progressing, we should also care for each other, spread love and help each other in order to build a sustainable society. I personally believe that the teachings of Swami Vivekananda are very important in present circumstances.



(1) JNU students' union protests outside the administrative block in 2019; (2) a group of masked men and women vandalised Sabarmati Hostel in January 2020; (3) students protest hostel fee hike in 2019; (4) then JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar at the university upon his release on bail in 2016 | EXPRESS

**Administrative Office, JNU**  
Phone: (011) 27530000  
Fax: (011) 27530000  
E-mail: admin@jnu.ac.in

**MKP/ADVT/20-1105** 30-01-2021  
Offers are invited from reputed, reliable and capable contractor / firms for the following works / supplies against the Tender numbers and description mentioned below.

क्रमांक/प्रस्ताव/दिनांक/ET/104	सर्वोच्च शीशर से मौजूद अस्तित्व की तलाश की आवश्यकता और तैयारी
IREL/Kanyakumar/2021/ET/104	Repair and Maintenance of existing building roof at MK Plant Premises
क्रमांक/प्रस्ताव/दिनांक/ET/106	सर्वोच्च शीशर से अस्तित्व की तलाश की आवश्यकता और तैयारी
IREL/Kanyakumar/2021/ET/106	Engaging an agency for providing semi-skilled persons for assisting in the operational and breakdown maintenance works during shift operations in MSP

For further details visit [www.mstcoor.com](http://www.mstcoor.com) or [www.mstcoor.com](http://www.mstcoor.com) and CPP website. Contingendum / Extension if any will be hosted in the above websites only. Sd/- HOD(Purchase)

**GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR**  
**MINOR IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT**  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO.1 (STATE PLAN)**  
Lamphepalt, the 28th January, 2021

No.EE/MID-III/NIT(SP)/2020-21:- Sealed rate tenders on behalf of the Governor of Manipur are invited by the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division No.III, MID, Manipur through Open Tender from the eligible MID registered Contractors for execution of a work within Imphal East District and Imphal West District under State Plan.

The procurement officer is the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division No.III, MID, Manipur. The tender details and documents shall be available from 29/01/2021 (11.00 AM) to 12/02/2021 (12.00 Noon) at the Office of the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division No. III, MID, Lamphepalt, Manipur - 795004.

**Bid Submission Start Date : 29/01/2021 (at 11.00 AM)**  
**Bid Submission End Date : 12/02/2021 (at 12.00 Noon)**  
**Date of Opening of Bid : 22/02/2021 (at 3.00 PM)**  
**Venue : Office of the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation Div. No.III, MID, Manipur.**

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
Minor Irrigation Division No. III  
M.I. Deptt., Manipur

**SCHEDULE I**  
**FORM A**  
**PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**  
[Regulation 14 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Voluntary Liquidation) Regulations, 2017]

**FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS OF BMO ADVISORS PRIVATE LIMITED**

1 Name of the Corporate Person	BMO ADVISORS PRIVATE LIMITED
2 Date of Incorporation of Corporate Person	26/09/2008
3 Authority under which Corporate Person is Incorporated / Registered	Registrar of Companies, Delhi.
4 Corporate Identity Number of Corporate Person	U74140DL2008PTC183791
5 Address of the Registered Office and Principal Office (if any) of Corporate Person	Registered Office Address:13, Abul Fazal Road, Bangali Market New Delhi DL 110001 IN
6 Liquidation commencement date of Corporate Person	27th January, 2021
7 Name, Address, Email address, Telephone Number and the Registration Number of the Liquidator	Mr. Pranav Damania IBBI/IPA-001/IP-00079/2017-18/10164 Address :- 407, Sanjay Enclave, Above Malindi Showroom, Opposite Millap Cinema, S.V Road, Kandivli West, Mumbai - 400067. Email id :- pranav@wiredadvisors.co.in Alternate e-mail id:- pranav@consultancyadvisors.com Call :- +9198204 68625
8 Last date for submission of claims	Within 30 days from the Liquidation Commencement date

Notice is hereby given that the BMO Advisors Private Limited has commenced voluntary liquidation on 27th January, 2021. The stakeholders of BMO Advisors Private Limited are hereby called upon to submit a proof of their claims, on or before 25th February, 2021, to the liquidator at the address mentioned against item 7. The Financial creditors shall submit their proof of claims by electronic means only. All other stakeholders may submit the proof of claims in person, by post or by electronic means. Submission of false or misleading proofs of claims shall attract penalties.

Pranav Damania  
Liquidator for BMO Advisors Private Limited

Date: February 1, 2021  
Place: Mumbai