

5,000 march for 3km to reach BJP state HQ

Photo: Kamalendu Bhadra

Josephine Justin & Antara Upadhyay

Kolkata: An aspiring actor, an LGBTQIA+ activist, a homemaker with two children and a madrasa pupil walked along with thousands of students from Esplanade to Mahatma Gandhi Road to protest the Citizenship Amendment Act and police brutalities on agitators across the nation.

Though the participants in the procession carried different flags, banners and raised slogans in different languages, they were bound by their zeal to resist infringement on their fundamental rights. Students rejected the "archaic" idea of politics in the name of religion. "Politics in the name of religion probably would have been accepted 60 years ago but not today. The youth will definitely stand up against it," said Saif Farooqi, a 23-year-old student from Prayagraj.

Campuses across the country have been singing with protests after the CAB was passed in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha recently. Police brutalities against the students of Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi University and Aligarh Muslim University acted as a catalyst for the movement to spread to all corners of the country.

Student and gender activist Dipanwita Paul of Jadavpur University said, "It is an attack on the minority groups of our country. They say they want to accept in about 6 crore additional refugees from the neighbouring countries but what about the ones who are already suffering here as citizens? There are burning issues like violence against women, unemployment and overall economy but people are being

TAKING A STAND



India is a secular country and CAA completely violates so many other Acts of the Indian Constitution. BJP wants to divide the country on religious lines

Mohammad Mustakim | GURUDAS COLLEGE STUDENT



Students make their voice heard at the rally in Kolkata on Saturday



The strength of India is being harmed. It doesn't matter what religion I belong to. There are people here on the streets from all religions. CAA is unconstitutional



Rhitorbi Sengupta | LADY BRABOURNE COLLEGE STUDENT



This CAA-NRC issue is against human rights. They are clearly targeting one specific religious community. This is inhuman. I will rally against it again

Iina Gupta | JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY STUDENT

It is against secularism. We can't have the govt dividing us on the basis of religion. To build the detention centres they have to invest so much money. Why is nobody talking about those financial aspects?

Samudraneel Basu | CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY STUDENT



kept occupied with irrelevant issues," said Paul.

Students started assembling at Shahid Minar Ground from 1pm onwards on Saturday. A spontaneous turnout of almost 20,000 students from various institutions was triggered by sharing information about the rally on social media. Several organisations distributed water and biscuits among the stu-

dents.

"This is not under the banner of a political party which will spend money to mobilise people. We have come after knowing about it on social media because the issue resonates with us. It is not about Muslims but minorities of every kind," said Roshni Azad, an LGBTQIA+ activist.

Sadia Gulzar, a student of Lady Brabourne College and

an aspiring actor, said: "Muslims have played a big role in the fight for Independence and building this nation after freedom. There is an effort to reduce them to second-class citizens and deny them access to resources. This does not augur well for this country because 'sabka saath aur sabka vikas' can happen only if every section feels secured in the country," said Gulzar.