



A file picture of people in Patna celebrating the Army's surgical strikes along the Line of Control. ■RANJEET KUMAR

Varsities to observe 'Surgical Strike Day'

UGC writes to V-Cs to mark the event

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The University Grants Commission (UGC) has written to the Vice-Chancellors of all universities to celebrate Surgical Strike Day on September 29 to mark the event along the Line of Control that day in 2016.

The letter also desires that students pledge their support for the armed forces in writing that day.

"All higher education institutions with NCC units shall organise a special parade on September 29, after which the NCC commander shall address them on the modalities of protection of the borders," says the UGC letter. "The university/colleges may organise a meeting, calling ex-servicemen who will sensitise the students about the sacrifices made by the armed forces in protecting the borders."

Plea to institutions

The letter also issues an instruction to students: "The students shall pledge their support for the armed forces by writing letters and cards, which may be produced in both physical and digital format." These letters of support, it says, will be publicised in the conventional and social media.

The UGC letter says that

physical letters of support so received may be sent to nearby cantonments and shared with Army officers visiting various colleges to meet students. It also asks institutions to encourage their students and faculty to visit the multimedia exhibition to be organised at India Gate in Delhi or in State capitals, important towns and cantonments across India.

But not all senior academics seem enthused.

Historian Aditya Mukherjee of JNU, co-author of the book *India's Struggle For Independence*, disagreed with the idea of taking a pledge of nationalism from the people.

"This is typically the BJP trying to project themselves as the nationalists. They have this great deficit of not being part of the national movement. Now they are trying to force it on people and militarise campuses. They wanted to install tanks in JNU and if we oppose it, they will call us anti-national," he told *The Hindu*.

"We are not anti-Army. But they want to push us through a nationalism test. Forcing people to prove their nationalism is no way to arouse nationalism. The way to arouse it is to create an idea of the nation that is appealing and inclusive."