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EU delegates met NGO led by mystery woman Madi Sharma

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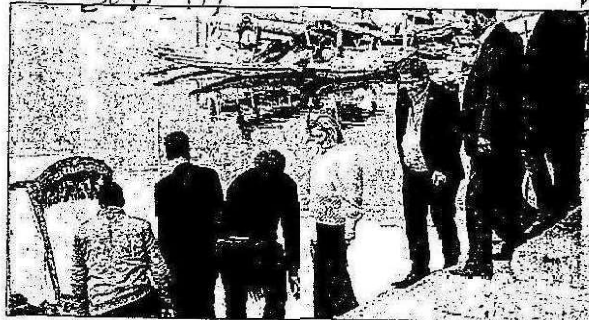
Srinagar: A delegation of 23 EU MPs out of 27 that were to visit spent an hour being briefed by the Indian Army in Srinagar on infiltration into India and Pakistani ceasefire violations before meeting several delegations, including one from an NGO led by a hitherto unknown woman named Madi Sharma, and local BJP leaders.

The EU MPs arrived here on Tuesday — amid a complete shutdown of shops in the valley, massive stone-pelting and clashes with security forces in parts of Srinagar — on a two-day visit to assess the situation after the nullification of Articles 370 and 35A stripped Jammu and Kashmir of its special status and the lockdown that followed. They are here at the invitation of the Indian government. Four EU MPs did not travel to Kashmir and have returned to their countries.

The J&K government will discuss with the EU MPs at a dinner hosted by chief secretary B V R Subrahmanyam here Tuesday night. "How normal" the situation was during the 86 days of lockdown after J&K's special status was revoked, sources said, adding that the dinner was hosted at Taj Vivanta Srinagar.

No media person was allowed to meet the EU MPs and even state-run Doordarshan was kept away from the delegation, official sources said.

Soon after checking in at the Taj Vivanta Srinagar on Kralaangri hilltop, near the Dal Lake, they straightaway went to the Srinagar Army headquarters where the GOC 15 Corps, Lt Gen Karwal Jeet Singh Dhillon, apprised the EU delegation about terrorist



SCENIC VISIT: Members of European Union Parliamentary delegation board a shikara ride at Dal Lake in Srinagar on Tuesday

UN aviation arm seeks info from Pak on denial of overflight clearance to AI One

New Delhi: International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the United Nations' aviation arm, has sought information from Pakistan on the issue of repeated denial of overflight clearance to Air India One in recent months whenever the Indian President or Prime Minister needed to travel between Delhi and the West.

India had officially approached ICAO against Pakistan's most recent decision to deny overflight clearance to AI One for PM Narendra Modi's ongoing trip to Saudi Arabia as such nods are otherwise routinely provided by any normal country. "ICAO's Council President has acknowledged the letter from India, and that he has sent a request to Pakistan, seeking further information," Anthony Philbin, chief of communications at ICAO secretary-general's office, told TOI from Montreal in the early hours of Tuesday (India time). TNN

infiltration from across the Line of Control and ceasefire violations by Pakistani troops from time to time. The delegation was also apprised of measures taken by Indian troops to repulse unprovoked Pakistani attacks on border villages, sources said.

The delegation later had lunch with top Srinagar-based Army officers at the Badamibagh cantonment here and stayed with the Army for about one hour.

The EU MPs then, according to sources, met several delegations, including an NGO named WESTT headed by Madi Sharma, as well as local BJP

leaders, at the Lalit Suri Hotel on Gupkar Road here.

Talking to reporters later outside the Lalit Suri Hotel, local BJP leader Altaf Thakur said the EU delegation was apprised of the situation in the valley after the nullification of Article 370. "We informed them that the situation is normal in the valley."

Soon after meeting with local BJP delegations and the NGO WESTT, the delegation took a round of Dal Lake and after that headed off to the chief secretary's dinner. The MPs were not allowed to go very far out on the lake due to security reasons, sources said.

8