



**Press Release, Visva-Bharati
5 January, 2023**

There is an unwritten rule in West Bengal that the authorities running our universities, such as the Vice Chancellor and other officers, shall always be subject to ridicule, humiliation, and even physical assault at the hands of those who disguise their thuggery and unjust demands as "peaceful and democratic" student movements. Whether it is Aliah University, Calcutta University, Rabindra Bharati University or Visva-Bharati, no university administration is spared from this torture. Strikingly, the students who indulge in violent activities inside the office of the Vice Chancellor or at his/her official residence shamelessly deny their involvement, despite the evidence. Violence has, tragically, become part of the culture of student agitation here, and this shameful development is justified as a necessary component of the so-called democratic movements for upholding students' rights. On 23 November, 2022, a group of students-cum-miscreants broke into and forcibly entered Visva Bharati's Vice Chancellor's chamber on the first floor of the Central Administrative Buildings. Upon entering, one of the students (Shri Debdutt Mete of the Undergraduate Computer Science Department) went inside the Vice Chancellor's ante-chamber, where the control panel for the CCTV was, and cut the wires to the CCTV machines, having also physically destroyed the monitors. The motive behind this act of vandalism was evidently to disable the functioning of the CCTV cameras within the chamber of the Vice Chancellor and other offices in the Central Administrative Buildings, in the hope that the gang's nefarious activities and violent misdeeds wouldn't be caught on camera. On that day, the Vice Chancellor was physically assaulted by one of the former students, Shri Somnath Sow, who punched him on the shoulder and blocked his way when he (the Vice-Chancellor) protested against the restriction on his freedom of movement and tried to exit his chamber. A little while later, another PhD-pursuing student, Ms. Minakshi Bhatt Acharya, painfully twisted the Vice-Chancellor's fingers while trying to snatch his mobile phone out of his hand.

In the dead of night of 13 December, 2022, a group of miscreants stoned the Registrar's (Shri Ashok Mahato) private residence, severely injuring some of his family members and causing considerable property damage. The stones in question had evidently been collected from the railway tracks, and more bags full of these stones were discovered in the temporary camp that the protesting so-called students had set up in close proximity to the Vice Chancellor's residence, Purbita. Also on that night, perhaps the same group of miscreants threw stones at the residence of Ms. Arpita Chatterjee, a library staff member. The stones shattered her glass

windows, and pieces of glass fell on her ailing husband, who is a chronic kidney failure patient, and also a former teacher of the Siksha Satra School at Visva-Bharati.

Once it was established that the temporary camp built by the protestors was the places where these nefarious plans had been hatched, the Registrar arrived on the spot immediately after his residence was stoned to request those inside the camp to dismantle the camp, since it was ultra vires to the order of the Hon'ble High Court of India, and had also been built without the university's approval. So, the camp was illegally established. Furthermore, the university furnished evidence to the effect the camp was the site of activities which were contrary to the interests of the university and also at odds with Rabindrik tradition.

On 14 December, 2022, when the Vice-Chancellor, having been held in captivity inside his private residence for 20 days, decided to go to his office, the student-cum-miscreants resorted to violent means to stop his movement. Only the efforts of the University's security personnel made it possible for him to go to reach his office. On his way back from the office, one of the protesting students hit the Vice-Chancellor with a stone (similar to the ones found on railway tracks) on the back of his head. The Vice-Chancellor suffered a serious injury, as a result, for which immediate medication was required and a scan was advised.

The above is a brief account of how the so-called student movement has been nothing but a brazen display of thuggery. The "might is right" attitude that has characterized this self-styled "democratic movement" is unacceptable, and shall be dealt with sternly. The culprits behind the aforementioned acts of assault, breaking and entering, and vandalism have been identified, and the quantum of punishment has already been fixed by the University Executive Council. What is most disappointing is the vicious role played by a teacher of Economics, who appears to have instigated the students to commit the aforementioned acts of violence. The University Executive Council has taken note of this, and has taken a decision as per the University Statute, Acts, and Ordinances. Under no circumstances shall violence be tolerated in the campus, and the University shall leave no stone unturned in restoring peace and normalcy on campus using legally-endorsed means, including rustication and dismissal from jobs. Nonetheless, the University has decided to give the students involved in these misdeeds an opportunity to resume their studies, provided that they tender an unconditional apology for the violence and disrespect for Visva Bharati that they have shown since 23 November, 2022.

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