



Press Release
10 September, 2023

There is a widely circulated proverb: “*guilty mind is always suspicious*”. Hence an appreciation for a good Samaritan who unconditionally gifted his possessions, land and property, to Visva-Bharati is interpreted by those who seek to curry favour from the political authority as an attack on those who are land grabbers, including those who are purportedly globally known for reasons which are connected with their achievements. Visva-Bharati registers its protest against those who illegally appropriated 65 acres of its land. It is a matter of shame that those who rose to fame because of their association with Visva-Bharati are also guilty of grabbing land illegally. Now, it is forbidden to condemn these individuals because of their political connection with the government in power; and, also the assurance to the leader by these so-called famous individuals for a better political position in India perhaps made the leader convinced that the future has already been charted by these globally reputed persons. So, unfortunate! An institution which was founded by an illustrious son of India, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore suffers by the whimsical and self-driven designs of some of the fallen individuals hardly receives support from the so-called *Buddhijibis* of West Bengal. They, instead, endorse the demand of the landsharks by congregating here at Visva-Bharati to justify that what is being done by these so-called visible individuals is perfect presumably because that also gives them political dividends. This is natural because many of the so-called *Buddhijibis* are parasites and withdrawal of government support may put them in precarious conditions; they are made MPs, MLAs and also selected to head many organizations in West Bengal although they do not feel bad that they are hardly recognized at the national level, forget about the global scene.

The controversy over ragging is now reduced to non-issues and everybody seems to have relegated to a non-issue the brutal death of a child due to the *Dadagiri* of a section of students. Those who were involved in creating conditions for an inhuman outcome are incarcerated and severe punishment will perhaps be meted out. Will that eradicate the source of such a mindset that enjoys at the cost of unbearable suffering of hapless students and individuals who are socio-politically peripheral. Ragging is not just confined to students’ hostels; it is omniscient in society. Who will bell the cat? The government may stringently impose the restraining rules and regulations; but will that be enough to uproot the sources of such a heinous mindset which is widespread in our society. Will the *Buddhijibis* take the lead? I wonder.

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The battle between the Governor and the state government over the appointment of Vice Chancellor has taken an ugly turn which was anticipated long ago. During the long duration of the Left Front governance, the expression *Anilayan* was rampant; it meant that without the nod of one leader of the Left Front, no academic appointment at any level was possible. The famous instance was the denial of the duly appointed Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University, Professor Santosh Bhattacharya even from entering the campus of Calcutta University during his term as Vice Chancellor reminds us how politicization undermines the so-called academic freedom. Professor Bhattacharya's fault was that he was preferred by the then Governor of West Bengal to a powerful CPI (M) leader for this academic position. So, the Left Front government deployed its entire machinery to harass Professor Bhattacharya so long as he remained Calcutta University's Vice Chancellor. Now, by pursuing same design though with a different name, West Bengal's higher learning centres are confronting the same predicament. Academic excellence appears to have taken a backseat; what prevails over is bootlicking regardless of whether the individual is academically competent in her/his field. I leave it with the people of West Bengal to judge whether the charge that most of our Vice Chancellors were not as academically visible as they were expected, is valid. It needs to be retold that one incumbent Vice Chancellor is in gaol because of his apparently direct involvement in financial irregularities bordering on embezzlement. So, the endeavour that a Vice Chancellor and the academic staff should be recruited on the basis of their academic achievement should not, at all, be a source of consternation to the government or the governed. At the same time, the technique of those in power of terrorizing the Vice Chancellors because s/he is simply discharging her/his dharma by slapping FIRs, one after another, is to be avoided to help the academically under privileged state of West Bengal to reach the stage for which it was at the zenith in not so remote past!

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