VISVA-BHARATI
বিশ্বভারতী
विश्वभारती

DATE: **06.05.2026**

PRESS STATEMENT

In a public speech at Baruipur, during the run-up to the West Bengal Vidhan Sabha Elections 2026, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India made certain critical observations about a university located in Kolkata. This speech made no reference to Visva-Bharati and contextually it had no connection with Visva-Bharati, apart from the fact that the Hon'ble Prime Minister, by virtue of his constitutional position, is also statutorily the Acharya of Visva-Bharati. This notwithstanding, a couple of newspapers seized the opportunity to tendentiously establish a bizarre connection between the Prime Minister's speech made on the hustings and Visva-Bharati. The claim in these reportages (if they merit such an appellation at all) is that while the Prime Minister is busy criticising other institutions, his own institution, i.e., Visva-Bharati, is declining, and that he has not done enough or anything for Visva-Bharati.

This accusation is, of course, patently and completely false and merits no disproof. We— the members of the Visva-Bharati community— know very well of the vast contributions made by the Acharya toward the institution's well-being and uplift. Visva-Bharati has no need, therefore, to offer explanations to anybody at all other than its own community. As such, it is out of Visva-Bharati's concern for its community's hurt at the spiteful dissemination of such canard that this Press Statement is being issued.

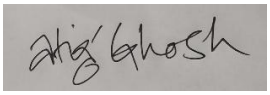
To begin with, it should be remembered that the UNESCO World Heritage status was achieved by Visva-Bharati during the present Acharya's tenure and his good office helped immensely in attaining this rare status.

For some unknown reason, these reportages have apportioned the blame of the so-called decline of Visva-Bharati to its apparent loss of connect with other countries and the institutions therein. Incidentally, Visva-Bharati has thriving communication and exchange with many countries and their educational institutions across the world— Argentina, Bangladesh, China, England, France, Italy, Japan, Romania, Russia, Scotland and the United States, to name some— and is in the process of establishing robust academic exchanges with many more. All of this has been possible only with the active support and encouragement of the Central Government, of which our Acharya is the head. Moreover, the Acharya, during his visit to Russia and Argentina, has presided over the unveiling of statues of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, and it is through his initiative that exhibitions of Gurudev's paintings are being planned in these countries.

Then, finally, there is the tired invective directed at the century-old *Gośālā* (cow shelter) of Santiniketan. This is the result of a particular obsolete brand of parochial party-line thinking that

(probably intentionally) ignores the history of the Santiniketan Ashrama. It should suffice to read Gurudev's *Śāntiniketana Brahmacaryāśrama*, where the poet instructs: "গোশালায় গোরু মহিষ ও তাহাদের খাদ্যের ও ভৃত্যের প্রতি দৃষ্টি রাখিবেন।" He further adds, "গোশালায় গোরু-মহিষ যে দুধ দিবে তাহা ছাত্রদের কুলাইয়া অবশিষ্ট থাকিলে অধ্যাপকগণ পাইবেন, এ নিয়ম আপনার অবগতির জন্য লিখিলাম।" In fact from the inception of Sriniketan, too, the *Gośālā* was an integral part of Gurudev's rural-reconstruction programme. That is to say, it is in the hallowed tradition of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, and in pursuance of his vision, that the present administration is trying to expand and improve the already-existing century-old *Gośālā* to serve an incomparably increased number of students at the poet's school today. Vicious smear campaigns, as such, serve very little purpose other than belittling and insulting the memory and philosophy of Gurudev.

This press statement is issued under the instructions of and with the approval of competent authorities.



In-Charge, Public Relations
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