

19.08.2025

PRESS RELEASE

In the light of the completely false representations of an “incident” carried—probably with malicious and divisive intent—by certain sections of the news media involving the names of the Nobel Laureate, Professor Amartya Sen and Visva-Bharati (Prof. Sen’s former institution), the Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor, Visva-Bharati, wishes to fully clarify that he does not bear any ill-will to Prof. Amartya Sen and, in any case, is dedicated to promoting academic events within the university premises. The Vice-Chancellor, in fact, was not at even cognizant of the entire incident until its distorted reporting got splashed across certain sections of the news media.

The alleged “incident” is reported, or at least is insinuated, as the Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor having deliberately obstructed and disallowed an event, organized by a reputed Bengali journal, for the inauguration of their volume on Prof. Amartya Sen. **This is a patently false accusation for the following reasons:**

1. The reputed Bengali publication did not approach the University directly but routed its appeal through the Head, Department of Economic and Politics, Vidya-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, to the Registrar’s office on 07.08.2025. The Registrar’s Office did not give any comment on the matter in writing. This is the first important point to be noted: ***There was no formal, official booking made in the first place.***
2. Through informal channels, the Head, Department of Economic and Politics, also sent a scanned copy of the letter to the Librarian (Acting), Visva-Bharati, by email on 08.08.2025.
3. In this appeal the Head, Department of Economic and Politics, Visva-Bharati, asked for the booking of Conference Hall of the Central Library on 14.08.2025 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. for the purpose of holding this “inauguration” event jointly with the aforementioned reputed Bengali journal.
4. The Librarian (Acting), Visva-Bharati, wrote back to the Head, Department of Economic and Politics, on the same day (08.08.2025) assuring that the Conference Hall in question was available, provided “any program/ meeting of the University administration is held” in which case “the venue will not be made available for you”.
5. The Head, Department of Economic and Politics, replied back immediately, thanking the Librarian (Acting) for his mail and agreed that, in his words, “Of course, we understand the primacy of the University programme.”
6. In fact, there was indeed a very prestigious University programme happening every evening in the University from 9 August 2025 till 14 August 2025. This is the Rabindra Saptaha, one of the oldest lecture series of this country, having started in 1946 following the proposal of Rathindranath Tagore. Prof. Amartya Sen, had he been any part of this, would have known the deep intellectual significance of this lecture series, for his illustrious forebears have been speakers in it. In any case, as a matter of policy, the University does not allow any other programme to take place in the same half of the day when the University has any of its annual functions and festivals scheduled.
7. But, and this is to be noted, whether or not the University would have ultimately allowed the programme to go ahead remains moot, for the Head, Department of Economic and Politics, himself wrote to the Librarian (Acting) an email which is quoted here *in extenso*: “*Due to unavoidable reasons, very unfortunately, we have to cancel the programme. I am extremely sorry for bothering you so much and do apologise for the same. We are withdrawing the booking of your Hall as well.*” That is to say, **the University did not cancel the booking but the organizers themselves cancelled the booking they had made.** Probably, they did so, realizing that the last



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lecture of the Rabindra-Saptaha was being held in the same half of the same day. We are not in a position to comment on the nature of the “unavoidable reasons” cited by the Head, Department of Economic and Politics. **This cancellation mail from the part of the organizers was received on 11.08.2025**, that is well ahead of the proposed date of the abovementioned “inauguration” event.

From the above trail of information, a few things should be clear:

- **First**, the University is painstakingly dedicated to uphold its non-partisan nature in academic and other matters, no matter who is involved.
- **Second**, the University had very little or no role to play in this entire course of events; and that the Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor had not the slightest inkling of all this.
- **Third**, the people who are peddling falsities and malicious rumours are either libel-minded and politically motivated, or they are being deliberately misguided by people with vested interests.

Of course, the University is in possession of all the relevant documents and will defend itself ferociously against any further attempt at maliciously tarnishing its image on the pretext of what seems in hindsight to be a non-issue.

On the issue of the hand-over of charge of Chair Professor at the A.K. Dasgupta Centre for Planning and Development, Visva-Bharati, from one professor to another, it is a routine official matter, internal to the University’s functioning, and is unrelated to any of the “incidents” detailed above. Such changes of charges and responsibilities happen routinely at this university—as in any other university of the world—and nowhere are they considered newsworthy unless motivated by malicious, defamatory intent.

Finally, the Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor, Visva-Bharati, wishes to reiterate his respect for Prof. Amartya Sen and to state unambiguously that he bears no ill-will toward Prof. Sen. The Vice-Chancellor also wishes to express his firm support for academic activities and his unshakeable commitment to the non-partisan advancement of academic culture.



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