

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

15 November 2019

Dear Colleagues:

I write you to seek your cooperation in maintaining a peaceful academic atmosphere in JNU campus. The persistent agitations and protests by a section of students have adversely affected the university's normal academic and research activities. All of us should make efforts at our individual levels as well as at the level of our positions of responsibility where possible to establish normalcy.

An atmosphere of confusion and misinformation was created over changes in the IHA Manual and the Administration has already clarified it by conveying the recent EC decision.

Despite concessions given by the EC, students on strike have continued to press their demand for complete withdrawal of the Hostel Manual. Some of them have turned violent causing intimidation and physical insecurity to some JNU teachers and officials in the campus. Even lady guards are not spared.

Such persistent protests involving occupation of the Administration Building, defacing of walls and floors and indulging in brawls with security guards and breaking open doors have maligned the image of JNU seriously. Such methods of protest can never be condoned: the agitating students have repeatedly broken laws, indulged in violating court orders, surrounded the houses of faculty members, harassed and tormented them and their family members, including little children in their houses, barged into the classrooms holding hostage, in one case, at least, a lady faculty for over thirty hours, manhandling her, pushing and shoving her around until she collapsed on the floor.

On 11th of November 2019, and then, again, on 13 November 2019, the agitating students have crossed every line of civil behaviour. First, they tried to storm the University's 3rd Convocation ceremony organised in the auditorium of a neighbouring institution, AICTE. While the Convocation went off peacefully, uninterrupted, in the presence of the Hon'ble Vice President of India and the Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development, hundreds of students gathered at the main gate of AICTE, breaking the police barricades and preventing people from coming out, including the Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Ramesh Pokhariyal 'Nishank' and the Chancellor of JNU, Dr V. K. Saraswat. They were confined in the building by these protestors for over six hours. Many of the graduands who came to take their degrees, their relatives and guests and the University officials also remained locked up in the premises. And, on 13th November, these students entered the Administration Building and vandalized badly the offices of the Vice-Chancellor and other officials. This vandalism of government property is going to cost lakhs of rupees in repair.

No civilised society, let alone a higher academic institution of the stature of JNU, would bear such abominable activities and behaviour by its members. The

administration has taken an extremely grim view of this condemnable and reprehensible behaviour of the agitating students and their mentors.

Let us all appeal to the agitating students, once again, to stop their protests, which have been hampering studies of thousands of students on the campus who are preparing for their end-semester examinations and trying to write their term papers. JNU administration would always like to engage in a dialogue and discussion, but the process and form of any such interaction cannot be dictated through coercion and illegal methods. No dialogue in this form will be fruitful.

I therefore request you all, that we should make extra effort to convince the students that the changes in hostel charges are not only reasonable but vital for the financial viability of our hostels. It is our duty and responsibility to keep JNU on the path of becoming a globally renowned university for which peace and normalcy have to be restored in the campus. I hope you will do your best in our mission of making JNU an island of learning and enviable recognition.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Jagadesh Kumar', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(M. Jagadesh Kumar)