



INDIAN HISTORY CONGRESS

(Established 1935)

Prof. Mahalakshmi Ramakrishnan
Secretary

Dear Colleague,

I write with a sense of sadness and disappointment at the manner in which the 79th session of the Indian History Congress, scheduled to be held from 28th to 30th December, 2018, at Savitribai Phule Pune University, was cancelled at the last minute. We had received a written request from the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nitin R. Karmalkar on 8th December 2017, which was accepted after due consideration at the EC meeting 29th December and reported at the General Body Meeting on 30th December 2017 held in Jadavpur University during the 78th session of the Indian History Congress. We were excited that the session would be held in the birthplace of the Congress, and maintained constant touch on our part with the Local secretary, extending every help and cooperation sought from us.

But to our dismay, despite reassuring us over the past year that all arrangements were underway, we were informed for the first time in early December that there was some financial problem being faced in organizing the 79th session without however giving us any detail of how much had been collected and what had been spent on booking accommodation. Despite our insistence that the session cannot and should not be postponed or cancelled and that the event must take place as scheduled as our members had already booked their tickets and made other arrangements to enable them to be present at the Congress, the authorities of the SP Pune University paid no heed and went ahead with the cancellation. We ourselves were intimidated by an email about this at 11.48 pm on 11 December 2018 by anonymous persons calling themselves “Team IHC”, which appeared to be emanating from the office of the Local Secretary in Pune. We immediately wrote to the Vice-Chancellor of SPPU expressing our surprise and anguish at such a step being taken, further asking him to ensure that the delegate fee be returned immediately to the members. No acknowledgement or reply from him has been received.

What is also unfortunate is the confusing and contradictory stories that are being circulated by the authorities at the SPPU in an irresponsible manner over the past few days, regarding various issues including the amount of money mobilized from all sources (ranging

from 14 lakhs to 75 lakhs in statements by the Registrar and Local Secretary respectively), and the date of intimation of their “problem” to the IHC (it has been reported in a newspaper that the VC has claimed this was done three months ago, at a time when the local secretary’s circular had just begun to be sent to all the members and the delegate fee was being collected). The promise anonymously made that the SP Pune University would “hold the session at a future date” is too vague to instill any confidence, and the Indian History Congress is taking steps to find an alternative venue for the 79th session.

Many of you had booked tickets well in advance in anticipation of the academic deliberations at the IHC. Some of you have incurred large losses because of the non-refundable or partially refundable tickets purchased by you. Many have taken leave from their work places to facilitate your presence at the IHC. We deeply regret that you have been put to such great inconvenience at this late hour.

The EC of the IHC in its emergency meeting held on 14th December, 2018, has decided to hold the 79th session at a different venue by end of March of 2019. Some provisional steps have been taken in this direction, and it is hoped that a definite circular in this regard will be issued by the Indian History Congress as soon as possible.

The volume of the Proceedings of the last session has been published and is being made available from 30th December 2018 to all eligible members, who may collect it in person or requisition it by post as indicated on our website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mahalashmi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

14/12/2018