



## INDIAN HISTORY CONGRESS

(Established 1935)

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*Secretary*

Considerable interest has been rightly shown in the press in relation to the recent abandonment of the 79th annual session of the Indian History Congress, scheduled for 28 – 30 December 2018 at Pune. The session was to be hosted by the Savitribai Phule Pune University on the invitation of its Vice-Chancellor, Professor N. R. Karmalkar, dated 8.12.2017. In it, he specifically noted that the arrangements would be on “the same lines as with previous host universities.” On the basis of this assurance, the Executive Committee of the Indian History Congress (IHC) meeting at Kolkata on 29.12.2017 accepted the invitation, and the dates for the 79th annual session were fixed for 28-30 December 2018 in agreement with the VC. The Vice-Chancellor himself appointed Professor Radhika Seshan of his University as Local Secretary.

The Indian History Congress on its part offered all cooperation that was sought by Professor Seshan in any matter she raised. She herself issued a circular in September calling on members of IHC to enrol themselves as delegates on payment of Rs. 2000/- each to her as Local Secretary, which is the highest rate until now required by a host University.

The statement attributed to the Vice Chancellor of the Savitribai Phule Pune University in a section of the press to the effect that the University had conveyed its decision to postpone the session three months earlier, that is early in September, is *entirely baseless*. No such decision was conveyed to the Indian History Congress in writing or orally, until the second week of December. The University called for and continued to receive delegate fees of Rs. 2000 till the 1st week of December 2018. Further, the local secretary’s circular was itself sent out three months ago to the IHC members; hence it is strange that this should have been done if a decision to not hold the Congress had already been taken at that time.

According to our latest information, the University has received more than Rs. 20 Lakh in payment of *delegate fee alone*. It is therefore incomprehensible how the Registrar of the Savitribai Phule University can claim that only Rs 14 lakh has been collected by the University from *all* sources, especially when Prof. Seshan herself has said that Rs 75 lakh had been collected. Nor is it comprehensible how when the maximum number of delegates at any previous session, including local persons has been no more than 1500, the Registrar can allege that 3000 people were expected. It is also not clear why the University did not book any accommodation at all.

The Executive Committee of the Indian History Congress at an emergency meeting on 14 December 2018 has decided to hold the 79<sup>th</sup> session at a different venue by the end of March 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 containing as many as 140 research papers after rigorous refereeing and editing. It is being made available to eligible members and to public on sale.

The Executive Committee has called upon the Savitribai Phule Pune University to expedite reimbursement of delegate fee all our members who had enrolled as delegates paying Rs 2000 each.

The Executive Committee is greatly concerned at the loss suffered by the members who have had to get their rail/ air tickets cancelled, and in some cases, private booking of accommodation. It noted that no sympathy for our members suffering such loss has been expressed by authorities of the Savitribai Phule Pune University. The Committee expressed confidence that the IHC members would understand the situation and stand by the Indian History Congress in the present situation.

*Mahalakshmi*

14/12/2018