

শাহতপুত্র বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

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OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR : AUROBINDO BHAVAN ANNEXE

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AN APPEAL TO MY FACULTY COLLEAGUES

As we are all aware, classes have been suspended since 16 March 2020 in our University. Despite some individual initiatives by teachers, regular classes have not been held either in on-line mode, or through the use of electronic means such as email, WhatsApp, Google classroom, and so on. This is due to the fact that a significant number of our students do not have access to stable high-speed data connections, and some students do not even possess handheld devices. I feel it is our moral responsibility to provide the students who do not possess a smartphone with a smartphone (which they would have to return to the University upon the completion of their courses), and to offer financial assistance to those students who need it to upgrade their data connectivity. I am sure you will agree that the adoption of these measures is required to address the challenge of the "digital divide". Initial estimates suggest that we would require about Rupees Forty Lakhs to embark on this social venture.

While we have approached the State Government, Chambers of Commerce, and the Alumni Association to try and raise funds for purchase of handheld devices and provide necessary data connectivity for these deprived students, it is likely that these attempts may not yield instant results. Accordingly, I am also taking this opportunity to appeal to my faculty colleagues to make a contribution, preferably one day's salary, to create a special central fund which will be used to purchase basic smartphones and provide necessary data connectivity to those students who cannot afford such facilities.

Since the University proposes to ideally start the intermediate semesters by the end of August, it would be highly appreciated if my colleagues can let the University know the quantum of their contribution within the coming two or three days. I am requesting the Finance Officer to formulate a method by which the contribution of faculty members can be deducted from their salary of the coming month. I am sure the University's faculty members will join hands to help our students and ensure that none of them is deprived of the access to academic activities during a period when normal classes cannot be conducted. This will be in the finest traditions of Jadavpur University, where we work together as a family in our continuing quest to provide our students with an education that combines excellence with equity.

I look forward to your response, and send my personal good wishes to you, your families, and friends in this time of crisis. Best regards.


Suranjan Das.