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"Today is a black day for India's democracy when Deputy Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Shri Anand Sharma was publicly attacked with sharp-edged weapon by government protected ABVP goons on JNU campus. We condemn this cowardly attack in strongest words.

This rank goondaism by ABVP goons reflects the mental frame of mind of BJP and Modi government, who want to stifle the voice of students, shut down JNU and curb civil rights with brute force of hooligans protected by Delhi police.

This incident happened today evening as opposition leaders, including Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi had gone to JNU campus to express solidarity with the campaign titled 'Stand With JNU/Save JNU and Nation' organized by all the students organizations, teachers union and present/former office bearers of JNU.

We had said it earlier and we reiterate again that debate, discussion, dissent and difference of opinion are essence of our democracy provided they are no hijacked by anti-India sentiments. Congress Party had severally condemned incident of raising anti-India slogans by a handful of persons on JNU campus on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 and had demanded strict action against them. BJP government, in garb thereof, has unleashed its anti-JNU tirade. None less than Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi (when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat) had branded JNU as a laboratory of secularists which needs to be shut down. Different BJP leaders have been tarnishing entire JNU as anti-national. Truth is that JNU is a laboratory of liberal and democratic thought process producing some of the finest minds in

India and world in every sphere. BJP government sent police into JNU campus, conducted room to room search and even sent male policemen into women's hostel. All this was done with a view to intimidate and stifle the voice of liberal and democratic thought process.

Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi and BJP President owe an explanation to the Nation. Will PM, Shri Modi take action against ABVP goondas? Will PM, Shri Modi take action against Delhi police who failed to provide security and permitted anti-social elements of ABVP to gather together with weapons? Will Prime Minister tell the student community of India the reason for curbing the freedom of expression? It is time that Prime Minister stood up to the prestige of high office he holds and takes decisive action and answer these questions to the Nation.”