

# Scroll.in

## NATIONAL NEWS

# JNU asks historian Romila Thapar for her CV to evaluate if she can continue as professor emerita

The university's website already has Thapar's CV, though seemingly an earlier version.

*Scroll Staff*

6 hours ago



File image of historian Romila Thapar. | PTI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University administration has asked historian [Romila Thapar](#) to submit her curriculum vitae so that it can decide if she should continue as professor emerita, *The Telegraph*

reported on Sunday. Thapar had retired from the university in 1991 and was made professor [emerita](#) two years later.

An emeritus position is an honour conferred by the university on a retired professor in appreciation of their past work. Once chosen, an academic typically continues in the post throughout, unidentified JNU faculty members told *The Telegraph*.

The university's website already has Thapar's CV, though seemingly an earlier version.

"It is a very unfortunate thing," [Thapar](#) told *Anandabazar*. "We are going through a strange time. Emeritus is not a mere designation. It is an honour related to the university's goodwill."

Writing in *Economic and Political Weekly*, economist [Prabhat Patnaik](#) said any periodic reassessment of emeritus professorship is out of the question. He said Thapar had responded to the JNU administration by reminding them what it means to confer an emeritus professorship.

Patnaik said JNU registrar Pramod Kumar wrote to Thapar in July, asking for her CV so that a "committee appointed by the university could evaluate" her work and decide whether she should continue in the university.

"Furthermore, she has quite rightly asked, what exactly is the committee going to assess and how," Patnaik wrote. "Is it going to give a grade to the books that she has published since becoming a professor emerita, the major one, *The Past Before Us*, being a pioneering study of historiography in early India? Is it going to evaluate the fact that she was awarded the Kluge Prize in History in 2008, which is regarded as equivalent to the Nobel and is given specifically in disciplines not covered by the Nobel Prize? How is the committee going to grade the other publications and the other awards?"

The post of an emeritus professorship has no financial benefits.

Thapar specialises in early Indian history and has been a teacher and researcher for nearly six decades. She was professor at JNU from 1970 to 1991. In June, she was selected for membership of American Philosophical Society. Thapar was also awarded the prestigious Kluge Prize of the United States Library of Congress.

Thapar was among the eminent citizens who moved a petition in the Supreme Court last year demanding the immediate release of a group of [activists arrested](#) for alleged Maoist links.

---

*Now, follow and debate the day's most significant stories on [Scroll Exchange](#).*

---

© 2019 Scroll.in