

# University

## 524 Today

FORTNIGHTLY

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## Nagaland University teachers up in arms against V-C Nagaland Dons Demand Free Probe

■ The V-C G D Sharma resigned twice only to take back his resignation

From NUTA sources

IN a press-release, the Nagaland University Teachers Association (NUTA) informs that its executive committee meeting held on 16 April 2004 deliberated on the representation submitted to the Vice Chancellor Prof G D Sharma demanding a high level inquiry into very serious anomalies and violations of UGC norms in matters of selection and appointment of teachers and rampant misuse of university funds.

The Inquiry committee NUTA demanded was, according to the demands made, to consist of representatives from the MHRD, UGC and two representatives each of the NUTA Association of the three campuses of Nagaland University.

The deadline of 15 days expired on the 15 April with no inquiry committee constituted by the Vice Chancellor.

Hence the NUTAK has resolved to highlight the issue in the interest of the

University and the public and take its own further course of action regarding the matter. The NUTA at Kohima (NUTAK) had demanded an impartial probe into the following:

1. In the interviews held in 2003 at Guwahati for teaching posts, several irregularities and manipulations have been detected. Successful candidates selected by the Selection Committee were not appointed and appointments were given to others through manipulation of the results after the interview. Documentary evidence of letters from Subject Experts regarding such a case has been received by NUTAK.

2. Candidates whose candidature was rejected on grounds of ineligibility by the Scrutiny Boards were called for the interviews by the Vice Chancellor, overruling the expertise of the Scrutiny Board and in direct violation of UGC rules. Such ineligible candidates have been selected and appointed for various cadres of teaching posts in Medziphema and Kohima campuses.

3. A Reader who was facing an inquiry of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour was promoted to the post of Professor pending Inquiry violating rules of service. The said teacher's candidature was rejected by the Scrutiny Board because he did not fulfill the academic eligibility criteria for a Professor's post. However, he was allowed to appear for the interview by the Vice Chancellor and given a Professorship, thus violating service rules and guidelines for eligibility criteria.

4. Before the results could be declared by the Executive Council last year, a candidate was already camping in a Dean's residence at Kohima. He was later appointed to the Reader's post.

5. Glaring irregularities in the appointment of the present Controller of Examination and the Deputy Registrar (Academics) who both fall short of the prescribed eligibility criteria for the said posts as per UGC guidelines.

6. Discrepancy in the scrutiny of applications and call for interview of the same two ineligible candidates for the

post of Registrar in the recent interview held at Delhi in February 2004. There has been clear violation of the eligibility criteria and UGC guidelines by inclusion of the Controller of Examination and Deputy Registrar (Academics) in the interview.

7. Rampant misuse and exorbitant expenditure of University funds for maintenance of 16 University vehicles being used here in Kohima campus. This is in clear violation of Central Financial Rules (CFR) where maintenance of vehicles cannot exceed 50% of the cost price of the vehicle. In the case of NU, the maintenance of one gypsy alone has incurred an exorbitant expenditure of Rs 8 lakhs Rs 26,579. The total expenditure on maintenance alone of these 16 vehicles has amounted to Rs 62,37,783 (Sixty two lakhs thirty seven thousand and seven hundred eighty three rupees only). NUTAK has strongly objected to this rampant misuse of university funds at the cost of academic programmes and development and facilities for student

> Contd on P 3 Col 2

## DU Teachers Reject BA Course Restructuring

■ None of the members associated with undergraduate teaching; Economics Deptt angry over non-implementation

From DUTA sources

IN a formal meeting on the proposed new BA course attended by more than 200 teachers, it was unanimously resolved that "the entire exercise of restructuring of the course be started afresh from the college level. The Staff Council of each college as also the subject general bodies should undertake the entire exercise afresh", states a DUTA press-release.

While favouring the restructuring of BA Pass course, all the participants were highly critical of the fact that none of the

members of the Committee which has proposed this new course is associated with undergraduate teaching and none of the teachers who are involved with undergraduate teaching are members of this committee. They also criticized the attempts of the University authorities in arbitrarily and autocratically imposing the introduction of this course. It was also emphasized that the propose course was too heavy and it would lead to increase in the number of failures, which is already over 50% in regular stream and 70% in correspondence courses. Most of them expressed the apprehension that there was a calculated move on the part of the University, at the behest of the UGC and MHRD, to ultimately replace the existing BA (Pass) and Hons courses by the proposed BA Programme. Some Professors from the Department of Economics, including the Head of the Department, expressed their anguish with the way in which revision of Economics (Hons) course has been held up by the University authorities for more than 2 years. □

## Weeklong DUTA Hunger Strike Yields Nothing

■ The story of wasted agitation(s) bu DUTA

From DUTA sources

THE DUTA staged a week long relay hunger strike beginning 19 April at the office of the DU Vice-Chancellor, Prof Deepak Nayyar, against his arbitrary functioning according to a press-release.

DUTA alleges that Prof Deepak Nayyar who has the mandatory duty to ensure observance of the provisions of the DU Act, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations has been flouting them. "Misrule is the rule for Prof Nayyar," states DUTA.

DUTA has prepared a White Paper on violation of the rules by the VC. The latest audit report by the Director General of Audit for Central Revenue show that the University is in financial mess too. Therefore, the DUTA is demanding institution of enquiry by the Visitor of DU (President of India) into functioning of the University as per the provisions in the DU Act enacted by the Parliament.

Incidentally Deepak Nayyar escaped a Visitorial inquiry by the skin of his teeth jbarely 2 months ago.

DUTA has also demanded total withdrawal of the Model Act proposed by the UGC which seeks to negate public funding of higher education.

DUTA is also enraged at mistreatment to ad-hoc teachers by the VC who has gone back on the report of his own Committee.

DUTA is highly exercised on refusal of the HRD Ministry and the UGC to meet their commitments.

The hunger strike on the opening day, 19 April, was joined by Mr Aditya Narayan Misra, President of DUTA, Mr Prakash Narayan and Dr Ved Pal Singh (Members DUTA Executive), Dr Gur Mohinder Singh (Member Academic Council), Mr Pramod Kumar Dwivedi, Mr Ved Prakash, Dr Veena Aggarwal and Mr Prashant Kumar.

On the 5th day, the main hunger striker was Dr Vijaya Laxmi Singh. □

Editorial

## A Leaking System!

**T**HE spate of leaks of question papers of all sorts of public examinations ranging from CAT to Financial Accounting of Bombay University (it just escaped making a hat trick) to the CPMT and the University of Jammu as also Madurai Kamraj University, rather late joiners, is a pointer. It will be reasonable to surmise that for every single leak that is detected or reported there are at least 99 which go undetected or unreported for various reasons. It may not be feasible to report because of time constraints. The person who has access to leaks may not even feel interested in pursuing the matter. The leaks may look trivial because examination involved is not worth it. Who, for example, take the leak of a question paper of BA (P) 1st year of the University of Delhi seriously even if it became a public knowledge? Clearly, the old methods of 'secrecy' are no more working. Smart sets have foraged the system or, more likely, they purchased their way through the system. Nothing new. But proportion is alarming.

Human failures are at work everywhere because of the immense premium on dishonesty. At the end of the day what counts is that someone has made it or "qualified". It matters little how and is never ever questioned. As any IAS babau and he'll appear an angel. But, the credibility or integrity of these public examinations has now come to be questioned as never before what with Sidhus of Punjab etc.

New challenges demand new answers. It is time those who conduct or organise these mega examinations where some 2.40 lakhs and more sit for CPMT examination devised new and better ways. The MHRD has made a public announcement that they intend to use computers and other tech gizmos to this end. They intend to run pilots for the new paradigms. That is how it should be. But, the real danger is that the more they try to improve things the more they will worsen in the hands of unscrupulous individuals. See how the MHRD has completely messed up the IIMs imbroglia? The *bara babus* of Shastri Bhavan ought to pay for their ineptitude even in this our age of *sab chalta hai*.

A way around the perpetual problem of leaks in public examinations like CPMT where the numbers are large and premium on cheating very high could be to use simple technologies like the one adopted by US corporation Microsoft which is just an example and by no means paraded as the "right" model. For their MCSE (Microsoft Certified Software Engineer) examination the corporation has a simple method whereby a "candidate" in any part of the world sits before a computer and question paper is randomly thrown up to him which is answered online and spot evaluation provided.

A variation of MCSE could be worked out by our MHRD and CBSE mandarins. Every candidate for CPMT should be provided a unique question paper which does not match any other. It's not difficult to work out. Some 5,000 odd questions which could be fed into a centralised computer which, in turn, could generate million of combinations of question papers containing (say) 100 questions each. Candidates, on the appointed day, go to their centre and press their roll number. A question paper randomly generated by the computer is thrown up and a hard copy thereof provided by the attached printer. Another copy of the same question paper is retained in the memory of the centralised computer. The candidate solves, marks or blackens the rounds and the optical character reader of the computer reads the answers and based on correct answers stored in the central computer's memory evaluates and gives spot results. No need to wait forever. No need to make the system so secretive. All that is needed is that someone at the allocated centres checks that only the candidate concerned appears for the exam and not his proxy. This will require another check by matching the finger prints with the central computer. The job of the invigilator and the centre superintendent is just to ensure that the candidate is not helped by any one else which is happening even now. It may not sound simple but the method is worth trying. Sometimes complex problems have simple answers. Only if someone somewhere is genuinely interested.

Readers' Voice

## Bhagat Singh College Vice-Principal; An Open Letter to Bombay V-C

**P**LEASE refer to the news item "And Then There Was None" [UT, 1 April 2004, Issue No 522].

In this regard I would like to clarify that the then Chairman of governing body, Adarsh Goel, suggested that the Vice-Principal should be appointed by **seniority without inviting applications**. Accordingly Dr Tewari was appointed Vice-Principal for 1997-99. In 1999, Mr R R Chaudhry was offered the post of Vice-Principal on the basis of seniority.

When the new Principal Dr (Ms) Jitinder Kaur joined the College in 2001 she first took the position that there was no need for a Vice-Principal. When the Staff Association insisted on the appointment of a Vice-Principal she issued a notice inviting applications from three persons so that she could choose one from them ie she went back to the practice prevailing before 1997 which had been discontinued in 1997. She refused to follow the decision of the Governing Body dated January 1997 that no application should be invited and the post be offered to the senior-most person.

(Dr) S B SAXENA

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[Thanks for correcting us. We did the story upside down. But, then, the real culprit is the University which has refused to take cognisance of gross wrongs being committed by this new breed of principals who think that they do not need laws. — Editor]

### An Open Letter to Bombay Varsity V-C

"Dear Prof Mungekar:

The recent leakage of question papers of TYBCom has justifiably outraged people in the city, especially students and their parents. You have talked about your determination to control the situation and to somehow devise a method to have fool-proof protection of the question-papers.

"However, some of us who have been teaching in colleges in Mumbai for years wish to point out that the leakage of the TYBCom question paper is only the most visible mark of corrosion in the system of higher education in the city. Alas, it is not the only one. The system leaks in every possible way and we wonder whether any vice chancellor of the Mumbai University can plug these leaks. However, unless this is done, the fool-proof protection of TYBCom question papers will only protect the public image of the University but will do little to salvage the system of college education in the city that is steadily but surely collapsing and gasping for breath. Here are some examples of the multiple leaks.

"1. Let me begin with TYBCom examination because the exam is conducted directly by the University unlike FY and SY exams conducted by colleges on behalf of the University. Look at the pattern of the question papers and see how predictable it is. Look at the assessment. The real embarrassment. The guidelines. The tacit understanding among the senior examiners to somehow, anyhow, inflate the marks. The marks assigned for non-answers. The liberalism practiced by everybody including the moderators whose only job seems to be to make assessment even more liberal so that a

lot of students can pass. I am not suggesting that the examiners should deliberately fail students. But should they pass as handsomely and easily as they do? Scrutinise how teachers assess more than 100 answer-books a day. The chatting, the laid back easy-going, almost careless, way in which the farce of assessment is enacted by a significant number of teachers.

"2. Then we have practical exams in some papers. Another farce at the local college level. Check marks of students separately in theory and practical exams. You will find out the inflated marks in practical exams because colleges are competing for ranks, for students whatever. Also to cover up that students haven't really attended practical classes.

"3. In science subjects, find out what teachers do during practical classes and exams. Check how many take tuition classes, how many are linked to coaching classes. Check how many actively don't teach.

"4. In FY and SY examinations, it is as bad by and large. Teach a little, ask a little. Have a question bank of a few questions. Have simple questions. Set paper from within this bank. Assess liberally. Further, if necessary award grace marks liberally. Pass as many as you can. Jobs and credibility are at stake for teachers and colleges. The key code is: when students pass in large numbers with high marks, everyone is happy. There are no scandals, no probes, no guilt.

"Also, don't strain the kids. And don't strain the teachers. They are too busy doing other things to have time to read good text books and reference books.

Nobody has time. Neither students nor teachers, nor parents.

"Of course, given decentralisation of college exams at FY and SY level, good colleges are better than bad colleges. There is more variation at every level. But that is not saying much. "5. Please check the lecture schedule of teachers across colleges specifically for TYBCom classes. Find out how many lectures are actually held. Forget the claims. Ignore the timetable. Ask students what they are taught, how they are taught. What teachers do in classrooms. You will be surprised by the answers.

"6. Look at the textbooks or what passes for textbooks. Their content, their quality, their price, and their authors. Most books have multiple authors from different colleges. Not for reasons of scholarship but for reasons of marketing. One can at least ensure that one's own students will buy books authored by one or else...

"This is not a complete list of leaks that operate within the system all the time. These are only illustrative of the malaise that afflicts the college education in the city.

"There are other fundamental issues of money, infrastructure, class size- a major culprit in all these ills, of appointment (or lack) of teachers and of local power of the principals and local management committees. All these are minor scandals and sources of daily frustration and despair for conscientious teachers.

"Oh yes, we all are most upset when question papers of university exams leak. That is a source of very public embarrassment and scandal. Other scandals and leaks are confined within

> Contd on P 3 Col 1

## Bhagat Singh College Principal has No Use for Law

Special to UT

**G**OING by the latest round of stand-off between the Secretary, Staff Council, and the not-so-new-now Principal, Dr (Ms) Jitinder Kaur, it appears that the Principal thinks of herself as know-all who has no use for laid down rules, procedures and practices.

In the latest, Dr Jitinder Kaur, Principal of Shaheed Bhagat Singh College (Delhi University) has issued a notice dated 15 April 2004 calling a meeting of the Staff Council — a prerogative of the Secretary who is elected — on 23 April and has taken upon herself even to lay down the agenda for the meeting which is mainly "to appoint" various committees. Worse, she has decided that since she is possessed of better wisdom than anybody who has headed the College for the last 30 years, the number of committees should be only 10 and not 33 as was the practice.

**This sort of behaviour seems to be in keeping with the ongoing trend in the University of Delhi where the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Deepak Nayyar, has also shown scant regard for DUTA and other laid down procedures and Statutes of the University for which DUTA has staged a weeklong hunger-strike demanding a Visitor-level inquiry into what DUTA terms violation of Statutes and Ordinances. In fact, most Principals (and what nuggets they are!) have been behaving as though they are a law unto themselves with no action against any of them.**

**Secretary'smissive!**

## To Bombay V-C

> From P 2 Col 4

the system. Others, the outside public and the media, don't notice and don't care. We live with them in silence to protect our own honour and pride, to hide our own shame. And in different ways we are all culprits because we all tolerate it. Sometimes- only sometimes- some of us (too few to matter, we suppose), fight our own little battles and give up after a while. We get blacklisted, are labeled troublemakers in the college and in the university departments. We are sidelined so that the system continues blithely with its corrosive and corrupt ways.

"So that is how it is. So please don't only treat the symptom. Look at the totality of the system. See if you make some difference. Otherwise, may be you can plug the present leakage, only to wait for another leak sooner rather than later.

We wish to clarify that all the colleges are not completely hopeless in this regard. But some of these practices are prevalent in almost all the colleges. More importantly, a significant number of colleges in the city have almost all these problems and leaks. Yet, these charges are difficult to prove simply because too many people are involved in too many small and, by now, routine ways in these practices. We ourselves do not know where and how to begin in any systematic manner.

"We write this letter to you because you are the head of the University and we believe that some small beginning to check these leaks can be made only with appropriate authority and systematic changes."

**CONCERNED COLLEGE TEACHERS**  
**[Who like to reman anonymous for obvious reasons]**

**N**ot to be outdone, the Secretary of the Staff Council, Dr N K Kalra, has shot off the following letter dated 17 April 2004 to the self-same Principal:

"Madam,  
"Please refer to my letter dated 8 April 2004 in which I had requested you to tell me **your preference for the date and time** of the Staff Council meeting and also **your preference for the**

**Returning Officer** for the elections of the Staff Council committees. I had also given you a list of 22 committees which the Staff Council has been appointing for the last 30 years. I had listed several items of agenda pending for the last several months for discussion/decision by the Staff Council.

"It is surprising that you have chosen to ignore that letter and have announced the meeting of the Staff Council for 23rd April 2004 **unilaterally** knowing full well that it is the prerogative of the Secretary to call the meeting of the Staff Council. I may remind you that in the meeting held on 12th December 2003, after the protests from members, you had agreed not call the meeting of the Staff Council without the co-signatures of the Secretary Staff Council.

"It is equally surprising that you have reduced the number of committees **unilaterally** and merged several

committees **arbitrarily**. This is **totally undemocratic** and unacceptable. Moreover, you are aware that it is the tradition of the College that a returning officer is appointed who announces a **proper schedule of elections fixing the date of nomination, the date of withdrawal and the date of election**. The election is to be completed by secret ballot before the time fixed for the Staff Council meeting. Your notice completely violates this practice of the College. Your notice does not include confirmation of the minutes of the past meetings and does not include any of the agenda items I had submitted to you. Hence the meeting called for 23rd April is not in order.

"I, therefore, request you to cancel this meeting and **give me your preference for the returning officer** so that he may be requested to conduct the elections of the committees as per the past practice." sd/- Dr N K Kalra, Secretary, Staff Council.

The surprise is that most stalwarts of the College are willingly taking this humiliation from the novice of a Principal who believes that she is above the laws of the land. □

**"The news is which someone somewhere wants to suppress; Rest all is adver-**

SHAHEED BHAGAT SINGH COLLEGE  
(UNIVERSITY OF DELHI)  
SHEIKH SARAI PHASE II  
NEW DELHI - 110017

Dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Meeting of the Staff Council will be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2004 at 12.30 P.M. in Room No.11 to elect the Secretary of the Staff Council and appoint the following Committees:

1. Time Table;
2. Chief Coordinator of Admissions;
3. Library;
4. Garden;
5. Students Amenities & Fee Concession;
6. Student Union & Cultural Activities;
7. Functions;
8. NSS;
9. Women Development Cell;
10. Staff Room Complex;

*Jitinder Kaur*  
Principal

**Who needs the Secretary anyway? Shaheed Bhagat Singh College Principal issues Staff Council meeting**

## Nagaland Teachers Demand Probe Against V-C

> From P 1 Col 4

activities which have been drastically cut down citing paucity of funds by the administration.

8. The serious financial irregularities in management of University funds for the past years by the Controller of Examination in the Examination branch of the University has violated financial guidelines and procedures laid down in the University. Tampering of marks and results has also been uncovered, which questions the credibility of the whole University as well as its examination system.

NUTAK has again demanded an impartial probe into all these irregularities to redeem the good name of the University. The stand of the teaching faculty has always been for an institution worthy of its name in terms of efficiency, transparency and accountability. The failure of all these and gross violation of standing UGC guidelines are a direct threat to the sanctity of the highest seat of learning and the future of our younger generation.

In the press-release, Rosemary Dzuvichu and Dr Ben Lotha, President and General Secretary, respectively of NUTAK, have appealed to all right thinking people who are concerned for the future of higher education and the younger generation to join NUTAK's efforts to bring transparency and accountability in the whole system in the interest of academic excellence thereby ensuring a secure future for generations to come.

Despite efforts and an e-mail as also a fax message to the VC, there is no reaction from Nagaland University. Either they have not received the messages or they do not care to answer or, more

probably, they have no answers. Any

which way, it warrants interference from the MHRD and UGC. □

### How Vehicles Guzzle Nagaland Varsity Money And to hell with rules and procedures

From NUTA sources

maintaining these vehicles in Nagaland University which by any standards in exorbitant:

**T**HE rule, according to Nagaland University Teachers Association (NUTA) says that the maintenance cost of a vehicle should not exceed 50% of the price. Given below is the cost of

Date of Purchase	Vehicle Regn No	Cost of Vehicle (Rs)	Maintenance (Rs)
24.03.1995	NL-01-1725 (Gypsey Hardtop)	Rs3,34,723	Rs8,26,579
8.08.1996	NL-01-2602(Van)	Rs1,91,837	Rs3,68,726
22.11.1994	1571 (Tata Estate)	Rs4,67,760	Rs3,89,981
11.05.1997	3347 (Gypsey King)	Rs3,45,088	Rs1,34,005
15.04.2000	0147 (Armada)	5,39,556	2,82,568
23.06.1996	0319 (Bus)	5,57,242	6,97,616
7.10.1996	2754 (Tata Sumo)	3,52,567	3,61,926
5.04.1996	2547 (Gypsey S/Top)	2,54,837	5,04,884
22.02.2003	0566 (Bus)	4,42,922	15,639
24.7.1996	2663 (Van)	1,91,837	3,68,726
8.02.2003	3307 (Jeep)	3,92,223	5,617
24.03.1995	1725 (Gypsy H/Top)		8,26,579
4.02.1995	0962 (Mini Tata)	3,67,364	8,87,328
TOTAL			62,37,783

Information compiled and supplied by NUTA

## UGC Decides to Bridle Corrupt Practices in the Deemed To Be Universities

by Amrit Mehta

WHEN Dr Murali Manohar Joshi, the Union HRD Minister, threatened to get the financial misdeeds of the IIMs exposed, 5 out of the 6 IIMs almost immediately agreed to fee-reduction in their Institutes as demanded by the Ministry. The Ministry or the UGC, which spend a huge part of the Indian exchequers hard-earned money on higher education, should not only threaten, but also expose the guilty, who have been squandering funds for non-academic objectives, and usually helping themselves with a part of the funds. The public has a right to know after all. And what is this ruckus being raised by the opponents of fee-reduction, who are condemning the MHRD for ordering fee-reduction in these temples of management? These very supporters of the autonomy of IIMs have at other times been crying hoarse over the elitist character of higher and sometimes 'lower' education in India. Just because it came from a BJP Minister does not diminish the merit of the argument that higher education has to be made affordable also to the poorest of the poor in the country. It is no secret that the exorbitant fees charged in certain elitist institutions comes up with the money for luxurious lifestyle of the 'exalted' faculty of such institutions, and also to line the pockets of some of the academic bureaucrats. This malady has now been prevalent for a long time in most of the deemed to be Universities, which get hundred percent funding from the UGC, but are run like fiefdoms by their chief

executives by changing the character of education in their institutions to suit their nefarious ends.

In this context a letter circulated to all the deemed to be Universities by the UGC is a welcome step. If implemented earnestly this would rein in a major source of corruption in many deemed to be universities, where the Vice-Chancellors have been plundering the funds meant for higher education like there is no tomorrow.

The UGC in its letter dated 16 March, 2004 has taken serious note of the fact that some of the deemed to be universities are not functioning as per well-defined objectives and limits, and are introducing new courses, opening study centers/academic centers, off-campus etc. without taking any approval from the UGC, while at times these centers are opened even in the absence of proper physical and academic infra-structure. The UGC has threatened to declare any such courses unrecognized in case the erring deemed to be Universities do not seek the approval of the UGC within 6 months; for starting new courses prior approval of the UGC is necessary. Such measures were long overdue, when there are instances of teachers of German, Russian and Linguistics teaching Latin, Sanskrit and Carnatic Music respectively without any proper qualifications and infrastructure at certain institutions, and offering courses like MA (Hons), which do not have any meaning or value in the job market and field of education.

The UGC, while defining an Institution as the one set up by the same management to impart studies in a specialized branch of study and registered under the same society or trust under the existing deemed University is registered, has also made it clear that such an institution will normally be authorized only to create within their own campus to conduct the authorized courses falling within the area of the specialization. In case the new department is to deal with a subject which is not the field of specialization or an allied field, the deemed university may be allowed to start such department only if that field is covered under the objectives for which the deemed university was established as per the MoA. The most significant condition laid down by the UGC is that in case a deemed university desires to start a new department in a field not covered under its MoA it will have to amend its MoA before opening the department. As such the deemed to be universities shall not operate beyond their approved geographical boundaries. Which in other words means that the Society has to first approve the setting up of such a department for subsequent incorporation of the amendment in the MoA of the Institution.

This measure seems to have been necessitated after the recent spat the MHRD has with the IIMs and some other elitist deemed Universities. If the Ministry still persists with its stance of holding an inquiry into the financial affairs of the IIMs

then the IIM-A will also surely fall into line, since the skeletons in the cupboards may be too many. In fact the MHRD should not limit itself to threats; not only the IIMs, but scores of deemed to be Universities will reveal sad tales of corruption once inquiries are ordered into their financial affairs. While the babus and netas have long been reviled for indulging in corruption, it is time to expose the gurus sitting on high pedestals moralizing to lesser mortals. It is a shame that many of the present-day academics have stooped to the level of common thieves to plunder funds meant for a noble cause of educating a nation.

Why do the Institutions, which have been established to "bring about qualitative improvement in higher education by way of realizing excellence of the higher order in their chosen fields," and to "function as per well-defined objectives and limits" in the absence of proper physical and academic infrastructure, as the UGC has defined it, start new courses, open new centers, which have nothing to do with the objectives and mandate of these Institutions? The surrender of the IIMs to the dictates of the MHRD, which came about only after they were threatened with exposure of their financial misdeeds, may have the answer to this question. The IIMs have been charging exorbitantly high fees from their students to swell their coffers, which luxury every deemed to be University cannot afford to indulge in, hence such institutions resort to the dubious practice of establishing new departments, setting up campus centers/off-shore campuses etc, and all this is certainly not done with any altruistic and academic motives. If the rules laid down in the MoA are violated to earn more money, then the motives also have to be dubious and unlawful. The fall out of such an activity is more central grant for any such institution, and a wider scope for the top brass to indulge in corruption.

### TOOL for loot

FOR the corrupt autonomy is a tool for loot. The UGC must clear this Augean Stable now. A beginning had to be made somewhere, and the fiefdoms called deemed to be Universities are the right places to start with. The Vice-Chancellors of such Universities are behaving like they are not bound by any law, as if they are not accountable to anybody, and run the institutions like their personal riyasats, where in cahoots with a hand-picked group of like-minded crooks they implement their agenda of open loot. The members of the so-called Board of Governors are made partners-in-crime, and mum is the word they believe in. It is an irony that one reads everyday in the newspapers about some lower-level functionaries of certain government organizations being convicted for accepting bribes amounting to 200-300 Rupees, whereas high-profile white-collar criminals roam around freely without any fear, because they have the freedom (read autonomy) to plunder public property. The autonomy, which was conferred upon these institutions for the sake of maintaining high academic standards is being misused by the present-day academic autocrats to become rich overnight. When caught, they are not booked like common criminals. This autonomy has become a handy tool for the corrupt to suppress honest teachers with the result that no teacher wants to remain honest anymore.

In this context the circular of the

> Contd on P 5 Col 1

## After IIMs, Is It the Turn of SPA Now?

From Express Newslime

EVEN as Dr Murali Manohar Joshi is fighting his last ditch battle to enter Lok Sabha from Allahabad once again in the face of heavy odds, a fresh controversy has arisen which, like in the case of 6 IIMs, relates to autonomy of School of Planning and Architecture (SPA), a "deemed to be University" under Section 3 of the UGC Act 1956.

Three petitioners, namely, Vijay Garg, Punit Sethi and Ajay Puri — all of them alumni of the prestigious Institute and former members of the Governing Council of the SPA have submitted before the Delhi High Court that the MHRD had arbitrarily changed the rules to reduce the strength of the general council from 55 to 14. The present members, they stated in their petition, were mostly from the government organisations.

Mr Justice Sanjay Kishen Kaul, in his order on 6 April last, said that "prima

facie" there cannot be an alteration of articles especially when the composition of the general council is concerned. He stayed the meeting of the newly-constituted general council of the SPA and directed the Institute's Director and Registrar to file reply by 6 May.

The petitioners had stated that the amendment was "illegal" as it had to be ratified by a 2/3 majority of the general council. An executive council resolution dated 23 June 2003 had stated that the issue of amending the Memorandum of Association (MoA) of the SPA would be placed before the general council for approval. But, allege the petitioners, on 24 September last year, the executive council of the Institute sought to adopt the changes suggested by the Ministry "under pressure".

The petitioners alleged that the HRD Ministry has "browbeaten" the Institute into "toeing its line" and withheld grants to put pressure. They urged that the Ministry be restrained from "illegally interfering" with the management of SPA.

By altering the strength of the general council, the petitioners alleged, it was made equal to the strength of the executive council. With this, the executive council was making amendments to the MoA without any meeting of the general council.

Justice Kaul stayed the implementation of any decision taken by the SPA's general council.

The petitioners urged the Court to quash the appointment of SPA Director, J H Ansari, alleging it was not in accordance with the rules. □

### Power of One!

- In 1645, one vote gave Oliver Cromwell control of England.
- In 1649, one vote decided the execution of Charles I.
- In 1776, one vote gave America English instead of German as a language.
- In 1868, one vote made Hitler the leader of the Nazi party.
- In 1981, Nahau Rooney won the Manus election by one vote.
- In 1998, the Vajpayee government was defeated in the Lok Sabha by one vote.

Moral — every vote counts.  
Go out and vote.

— Robin R D'Souza in *The Times of India*

**We encourage teachers' and non-teaching employees' organisations in universities and other higher educational establishments to take advantage of UT and "share" with the university community — their grievances (both individual and collective), their achievements including successes or failures in collective actions, unresolved issues, etc. It may not bring them instant success. It may not even help them very immediately. But it will create an environment where eventually their individual grievances and**

## Examination Kurukshetra Style

Dr Vinay Kumar Malhotra

**E**XAMINATION season is going on and it is pertinent to review the annual examination system of the Kurukshetra University which is one of the oldest universities of north India. Examination, the back bone of an education system, is being conducted in an ad hoc manner with no definite rules and procedures to conduct the same. That is why there were cases of paper leakage in Kurukshetra University last year.

### Double Standards

**I**n the conduct of annual examination the University follows double standards. Several examples may be given to prove this.

**First**, double standard is followed in the case of regular and correspondence students. There are two sets of syllabi, question papers and exam for the same class; one for regular students and other for correspondence students. Syllabi for regular students are tough and lengthy. For example regular students of MA have to appear in 5 examinations whereas correspondence students in 4 exams. Question papers for regular students are different from that of correspondence students. Question papers of the latter are usually easier than the former one. The whole system is tilted in favour of private and correspondence students because the University earns a lot of money from them. The easy way of examination is particularly designed for them to attract more and more students to distance education (correspondence) courses. Regular students of affiliated colleges and university teaching departments are at disadvantage

position despite the fact that they devote more time throughout the year in class rooms and pay more fees. This dual system of examination for the same course/class is highly unjust and unfair especially to regular students.

**Second**, there is system of internal assessment for the under-graduate (UG) classes and not for post-graduate (PG) classes. In the recent past the situation was vice-versa. At that time internal assessment was only for post-graduate classes. Why this double standard in regard to internal assessment which is otherwise a good system? It should be applicable for both UG and PG courses.

**Third**, the whole examination system is highly loaded against lecturers teaching post-graduate classes in colleges. Their classes start in the last week of July every year and end in the last week of March or first week of April. Whereas teaching work of lecturers teaching under-graduate classes end in the last week of February and they perform examination duties in April and thereafter enjoy full two months as summer vacation. On the other hand lecturers teaching post-graduate classes have to perform compulsory examination duty (they cannot say 'no', it is obligatory) in May and June ie during summer vacations. Most of the lecturers teaching MA classes in colleges complain that they had no summer vacation for the last many years as PG exams are usually held during summer vacations. The UG lecturers whose teaching days are less than PG lecturers enjoy full vacation whereas the latter

teach more and have little or no vacations. It is suggested that in PG exams, all lecturers working in colleges whether UG or PG should be put on duty by rotation so that every one can have some vacations or alternatively all exams should be conducted by mid-May and there should be no exam during summer vacations.

**Fourth** double standard is in regard to university and college teachers. In Kurukshetra University's own campus teacher of the same department or college may be appointed Centre Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent in his own dept or college. But this is not allowed in the affiliated colleges. A college lecturer cannot be appointed as Centre Supdt or Deputy Supdt not only in the college where he is working but also not in the city where he is working. He is given the same appointment in some other city's college where arrangement for his safe and comfortable stay is seldom made. It means integrity and honesty of college lecturers is doubtful whereas of university's campus staff is above board.

### Too Many Exams for Too Long

**A**nnual exams of Kurukshetra University start on 27 March and end by mid-June and some time by end June every year. No other university in north India has such a long period of examination. Too many exams are due to increase in the number of Distance Education (correspondence) and Self-finance courses. Whereas neither the Directorate of Distance Education nor Self-finance courses in colleges have any permanent staff to conduct exams for these courses. The whole burden of conducting exams for these courses in addition to their own regular courses has been put on limited regular teaching staff of affiliated colleges. Every year permanent and regular teaching staff is diminishing in colleges. Because Haryana Government is not sanctioning any new teaching posts in colleges nor even allowing appointment in place of retired teachers. Recruitment of regular staff is totally banned in Haryana where as examination work is increasing every year. Ad hoc, part time and temporary staff teaching Self-finance courses is not put on any examination duty. So the whole burden of additional examination work has to be borne by the limited and dwindling teaching staff of affiliated colleges. Neither Haryana government nor University authorities are seriously realizing this grave problem.

To overcome this problem two suggestions are put forward. One; if the Haryana government does not want to lift ban on new recruitments it should at least lift the ban on recruitment of teachers in colleges especially in place of retired teachers. Two; ad hoc, part time and temporary teachers with two years experience should be allowed to perform at least supervisory duty in exams of distance education and self-finance courses. There is no dearth of such teachers.

**EXAMS EVEN ON SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS:** It has already been mentioned above that university and college teachers in Haryana have to perform exam duties even during summer vacations. Not only this they are not spared on Sundays and gazetted holidays. Even an uneducated and unskilled servant or employee gets at least one holiday a week but condition of those teachers who are appointed Centre Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent is worse as they do not get any off even on Sundays. It is suggested that there should be no exam duty on Sunday.

### Why One Session only?

**F**or the last few years there were two sessions of examination every day ie morning and evening. This year, there is only one session that too evening session in this hot summer. A few years back, there used to be only one session in the morning only. In order to save days and finish exams on time, two sessions were started. Only God knows why this good practice of two sessions has been stopped again from this year.

### Adhocism in Practical Exams

There are no fixed system and dates for practical exams. These can be held any time before or after the written exams. These can be held at short notice with great inconvenience to students. Sometime examiners do not turn up to conduct practical exam whereas candidates from far off places gather at a centre for the same. They have to go back disappointed.

### No Criterion for Flying Squad Duty

Flying squad duty which is the most important in the examination system has no fixed criterion. A teacher with five years experience can be appointed as flying squad member whereas a senior teacher with 30 years experience as Assistant Supdt. Only a few senior and highly honest teachers should be appointed for this duty. Minimum condition for this duty should be 25 years teaching experience, at least two time experience of working as both Centre Supdt and Deputy Supdt and ten years experience as Asstt. Supdt. Convener and members of flying squad should not be given any other invigilation duty in the subsequent examinations.

**Spot Evaluation:** The system of spot evaluation and table marking introduced a few years back is also not doing well. By introducing it the University has passed its burden on colleges. This system is good if colleges have not only sufficient but surplus staff. When the whole staff is busy in invigilation duty, it is very difficult to find examiners for marking answer sheets. In this system as examiners have to check the papers during fixed hours and as per schedule in a college, they usually examine answer books in a great hurry as they have also to perform invigilation duty the same day. Students suffer as their answer sheets are not judiciously examined. The old system of examining at home was better.

**WRONG DEGREES:** This year another discrepancy was witnessed. Most of the post-graduates received degrees with wrong entries. Their name or father's name, roll number and registration number were wrongly mentioned in the degree. Too many mistakes were never seen the past. It shows how carelessly degrees were prepared. Graduates from different cities had to rush to the Kurukshetra University to make necessary corrections in their respective degrees.

After every few years there is talk of examination reforms, some committees are formed, some cosmetic reform are introduced. With the change of university officials (like VC and Controller of Exam) after every few years, every thing again changes. Reforms introduced are usually changed by new incumbents. The situation becomes bad to worse with every change. The system remains victim of whims and fancies of those who matter. No one cares for students and staff in a system based on ad hoc rules, regulations and procedures. □

## UGC to Bridle Corrupt Deemed Universities

> From P 4 Col 4

UGC is a step in the right direction. It has stipulated that 'the deemed University intending to open a new department in its campus or an off-campus center/institution shall approach the UGC at least six months prior to opening such center on a proforma prescribed for this purpose.'

But then it says that 'a deemed university desirous of introducing a new course/program in a professional subject shall comply with all the requirements as required by statutory professional councils and obtain their prior approval before approaching the UGC'. Since the circular already stipulates the amendment of the MoA before opening any department not covered under its objectives, any new programs also,

which are not covered under its objectives, must also be sent for approval to the UGC only after amending the MoA. Any ambiguity on this account will amount to legitimizing all those illegal acts of the corrupt, which have become de-facto. This sort of populist measure adopted by politicians should not be allowed to invade the academic field if the MHRD and UGC are serious about cleansing the higher education system in India. □

### Heard That!

**IIMs are not organised into "departments" as in Universities with an internal hierarchy (such as a head of the Department exercising powers over the "junior" faculty). The IIMs have a collegial system, in which faculty members are considered as equal colleagues, to be respected rather than ruled over. The Chairpersons of the areas are more like "coordinators" rather than "bosses", and their roles are to facilitate and reconcile rather than adjudicate. The faculty members are permitted multiple memberships in different areas and groups, so as to enable them to work across disciplines and enhance their potential.**

— Position Paper by IIM-A faculty

## Education and MPLADS

by Eduardo Faleiro

**I**n a recent letter addressed to all Members of the Rajya Sabha the Union Minister of Human Resource Development urges them to allocate at least 10% of funds under "Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme" (MPLADS) towards improvement of Primary Schools. The Minister states in his letter that "Primary/Elementary schools are the foundation of the Education System but they are woefully short of funds. We have made provision for certain annual grants under SSA but much more is needed". Indeed, whilst the 86th Constitution Amendment provides for the Fundamental Right to Education there has been no effort to increase the

budgetary allocation. There was not even a mention of this law nor any specific proposal towards its enforcement in the Union Budget 2003. Plan per capita allocation on Education has further declined from 30 paise in 2002-03 to 18 paise in 2003-04. Economic theory suggests that liberalization necessarily implies greater State participation in the social development sector. Yet, our economic reforms and the globalization process have focused on integrating markets and have neglected the development of human resources.

The emergence of the "knowledge society" in the new millennium whereas knowledge is the source of wealth rather than capital or labour makes literacy a

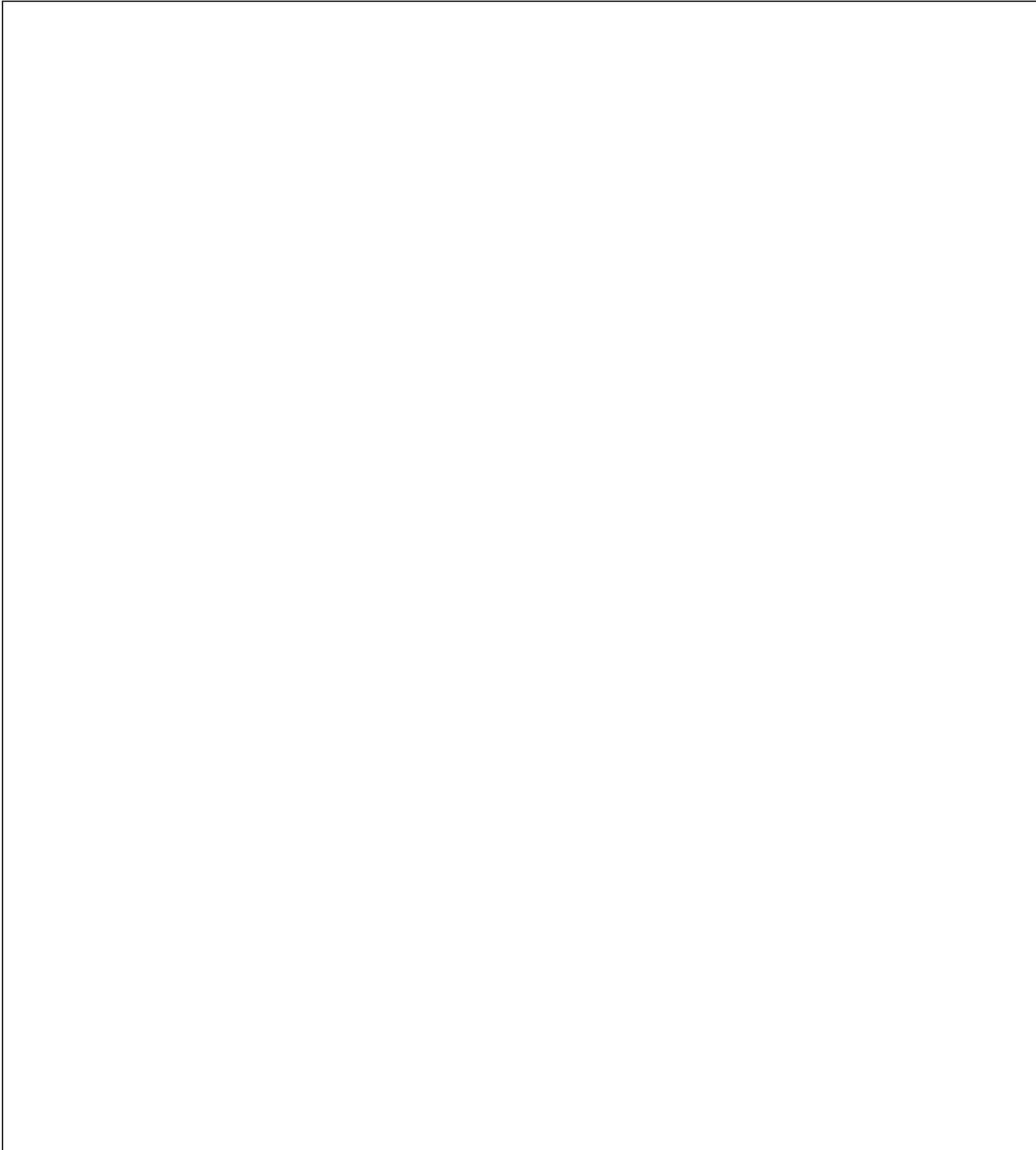
must. Public education occupies a fundamental position in a democratic society. The Supreme Court has held in several cases that every citizen regardless of his or her economic status is entitled to quality education provided by and for the public. This right is now being quietly eroded by the manner in which privatization and commercialization is being pursued in the country. Education is increasingly being seen as a business and the "crisis in education" myth is being promoted in some quarters to justify the dismantling of the Public Education System at all levels.

**Utopian!**

**I**t is appropriate that the Union Minister should appeal to Members of Parliament so that a substantial portion of MPLADS funds is earmarked for education facilities in their constituencies. It would, however, be utopian to expect MPLADS to provide for all the additional 4 lakh schools and 40 lakh teachers that are required for universalisation of elementary education in India.

MPLADS was launched by the Union Government in December 1993. The objective was to enable Members of Parliament to execute developmental works as demanded by locally felt needs. The Union Ministry of Statistics and

> **Contd on P 7 Col 1**



## Does India Shine in Scientific Research?

by H S Virk\*

**We must look into the factors which impede the growth of science in India says the author**

**D**URING my teaching and research career of 40 years, I have been associated with all the universities in Punjab. Punjab Agriculture University (PAU) Ludhiana adopted the American model for teaching and research, since its inception, under a collaboration with Ohio University at Columbus in USA. Research activity was promoted by its visionary Vice Chancellor, late Mohinder Singh Randhawa (ICS). As a consequence, Green Revolution was ushered in India by PAU scientists. Punjab University, Chandigarh was set up in Hoshiarpur and Solan after the partition till it moved to Chandigarh in 1957. It had a good tradition of scientific research in basic sciences since its Lahore days in 1924 when professor S S Bhatnagar introduced the Honours system at BSc level, followed by a full term of research leading to MSc (Hons).

Punjabi University, Patiala was set up in 1962 for the promotion of Punjabi language and culture in Punjab. It was established under a politically-motivated plan to appease the Sikhs who were demanding a Punjabi Suba based on their mother-tongue Punjabi. It is a multi-faculty university but its main contribution has been in the field of Punjabi language and literature, and a study of comparative religion. Guru Nanak Dev University at Amritsar was established in 1969 to promote the study of Sikh religion and for propagation of Guru Nanak's teachings at global level. It is also a multi-faculty university and its focus shifted from Sikh religion to applied sciences. The university has done well in sports, applied science and technology and in social sciences.

It is a mere coincidence that all the universities in Punjab have been rated

'5-stars' by the National Assessment & Accreditation Council (NAAC). Perhaps the Vice Chancellors of Punjab played good hosts to members of NAAC team, or it was on the basis of scientific research that the universities scored the coveted top rank of five stars. On the basis of bibliometric analysis of scientific research carried out in 1980, it was revealed that out of four universities of Punjab, three were included among the top 25 institutions of India. But a repeat survey, carried out by National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (NISTADS), New Delhi (funded by Ministry of Science & Technology, Govt. of India) carried out in 2000 reveals interesting results. None of the universities in Punjab occupies a rank among the top 20 institutions of India, except PGIMER in Chandigarh which is rated as the second best in India in medical sciences. During the last 20 years, there was a fall in research output both in quantity and quality as revealed by the survey.

### Global scenario

**L**et us compare the scenario at the global level. Scientific productivity is being measured by an international institute in Pennsylvania (USA) on the basis of research papers published by scientists in international journals. The results of the survey are made available in the form of CD-ROM and published as Science Citation Index (SCI). Every individual scientist, institution or country is covered by SCI survey. We can evaluate the research performance/productivity of Indian scientists and institutions using CD-ROM and this job is entrusted to Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC), New Delhi. Using the

database available at INSDOC, any intelligent layman can check the health of Indian science and its productivity.

Surprisingly, the survey reveals a dismal state of affairs in scientific research in India at the global level. During 1980's, India occupied 8th position among top 20 nations of the world in scientific research. During 1990's India came down in rank to 12th position, after Italy, Holland, Spain and Australia, with only one tenth of scientific manpower available compared to India. It clearly shows our per capita productivity is much lower compared with Europeans; what to speak of Japanese and Americans who are far ahead. During the recent years, the slide down in scientific research in India continues and it has occupied 21st position and is now out of top 20 nations. Compared with India, scientific productivity of China, South Korea and Japan, our Asian giants, has increased immensely.

A commentary on slowing down of Indian science has been published in *Current Science* (Vol 86, 25 March 2004), a science journal published by Indian Academy of Science, Bangalore, by a renowned scientist, Gangan Prathap (CMMACS, Bangalore) which will send a shiver down the spine of our political leaders who are blowing the trumpet of 'Indian Shining' and 'feel good' factors. "India's total scientific manpower is large (3rd in the world after USA and Russia) but there is a decline in the number of research publications from Indian Scientists", as pointed by our Prime Minister in his speech at Indian Science Congress session held at Bangalore (2003).

### Factors

**L**et us look into factors which are responsible for decline in scientific productivity in India :

- After 1980's there is a paradigm shift in the choice of careers by young Indians. "There is an alarming decline in the number of students seeking a career in scientific research," admitted by Deputy Prime Minister (L K Advani's speech on 4 May at Bangalore).
- The number of R & D scientists/engineers in India is around 157 per million, which is 1/50th of the corresponding figure for South Korea and 1/30th of that for USA or Japan.
- Considering all fields of Science, India ranks 21st in quantity of research papers published but when we introduce a measure for quality (SCI), its rank drops to 119 among 149 nations considered in the survey report (CD-ROM).
- Our productivity is 20 papers per million while the corresponding figure for USA is 1000 per million. We are lagging behind China, S Korea and Japan.
- Our share of global output in R & D is only 1.58% while India has 17% of global population.
- Our R & D expenditure per capita is 1/100th of South Korea and much lower compared to other scientific giants at global level.
- Indian scientific establishment is bogged down by too much bureaucratization which hinders the growth of science.
- Universities have been ignored in comparison with scientific establishments, namely, Atomic Energy, Space and elite institutions like TIFR (Mumbai) and IISc (Bangalore), so far as funding of scientific research is concerned. We now face the music of this topsy-turvy scientific policy adopted by our government (Nehru regime in 1957).
- Our science managers and planners did not encourage open-ended research but laid more emphasis on target-oriented research in some thrust areas, namely, Defence and Atomic Energy, at the cost of basic sciences.

I agree with Gangan Prathap when he echoes my sentiments: "The men we celebrate in India today are mission-mode managers, institution-builders, network managers and system-integrators, and the would be giants of science (the Sahas and Ramans) have now withered away under these great banyan trees of the mega-organizations performing strategically targetted S & T". If we want to have India shining in scientific research during 21st century, we must look into the factors which impede the growth of science in India, particularly in the University system. □

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## Education and MPLADS

> From P 6 Col 4

Programme Implementation is the administrative Ministry for the scheme and the Collector of the District where the MP recommends the works is responsible at the ground level. Each Member of Parliament may endorse projects up to Rs. 2 crore per year for his or her constituency. The funds are disbursed directly by the Union Government to the concerned District Collectors. Members of the Lok Sabha may utilize the funds within their own parliamentary constituencies whilst the Rajya Sabha MPs may select one or more districts within their State for this purpose.

MPLADS has contributed significantly towards fulfilling some of the needs of the people. However, the objectives of the scheme cannot be said to have been fully achieved. Just like with equally well intentioned schemes the problem is with actual implementation. Monitoring and supervision is a weak link. This is largely due to the inadequate infrastructure available with the Collectors vested with the responsibility. For instance, the number of visits by the concerned officials to the site of the projects to monitor their implementation is often far less than what is required under the guidelines. The Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training at New Delhi is expected to arrange the training of District officials involved in the implementation of MPLADS. Government is also required to provide Internet and teleconferencing facilities so that an updated picture of the works under implementation is available to the

interested parties but such facilities have so far not materialized. At the State level too it is necessary to follow the rules of the scheme more effectively. MPLADS provides that implementation and coordination of the different executive agencies should be scrutinized at least once a year by the Chief Secretary along with the District Collectors and the Members of Parliament belonging to the State. In several States no such assessment has ever taken place.

### Role of MPs

**I**t would perhaps be more appropriate and certainly more in conformity with the constitutional mandate of separation of powers if the traditional role of MPs which is to supervise executive action was strengthened rather than involving them in the executive action itself. The object of the scheme is to reduce maladministration in government activities yet direct participation by MPs in the implementation of the works may distort the entire scheme of legislative action and administrative responsibility.

Indeed, there is a reversal of roles. Whilst Parliament is expected to supervise and control executive action in the case of MPLADS it is the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation that in substance and effect decides the scope and direction of the scheme and the concerned Parliamentary Committees mostly implement the views of the Ministry.

The Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General on MPLADS tabled in Parliament last year calls for a "thorough review" of the present arrangements for the implementation of the scheme. "Such a review" it says, "should cover the

present manner of resource transfer along with the technical and administrative arrangements of the scheme so as to fully achieve its stated objectives". Now more than a decade since MPLADS came into operation the time has surely arrived to undertake a comprehensive review of its performance.

It is also hoped that after the ensuing Parliamentary elections the new Government will assert its undiluted commitment to universalisation of elementary education and provide all the required financial support. The Government primary education system in the country has suffered from deprivation and degradation due to inadequate allocation of resources. It also suffers from what might be called "social attention deficit" or sheer lack of attention and concern by the community at large including policy makers at all levels. □

[The writer is a member of the Rajya Sabha and a former Union Minister]

### What's New!

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## Phoney Feelgooders; They're only calling 'collect'

by C S Kalra

**A**RE you one of those who got a recorded phone call from the Prime Minister Vajpayee? Make no mistake. It was a collect call! Come June and the new Government and the Budget, the money spent on these, and much else, will be collected from you. It may not be shown in your phone bill but pay you will.

Waiting in the wings for you, the middle-class feelgooders, is the fat bill — through heavy personal taxes and through equally heavy taxes on new services. Commodities will probably have to be left out of increased tax net in view of the reduced customs under WTO diktats which forces the Government to keep excise and sales tax in consonance with the customs duty to keep the domestic goods competitive. But more services, including education, may have to be brought under the tax net to increase the tax base.

And equally big are going to be your fuel bills. Expect a hefty price rise for cooking gas. Something like Rs 94 a cylinder already demanded by IOC. And Rs 5 extra for a litre of petrol. Diesel could be Rs 3 or so more. Kerosene is unlikely to be spared. Governments can hide the truth for a while but not for very long. Somebody somewhere has to pay for the party times. How else does one resolve the contradiction that while the international crude prices are rising uncontrollably and have crossed \$ 32 a barrel, the likes of Ram Naik have kept them artificially repressed despite the curious inquiries from the Election Commission. This is contrary to the spirit and word of demolition of administered price mechanism which happened about 2 years ago. And if you actually believe

that petroleum companies earned like 50% profits, as claimed by the Secretary of the Ministry of Petroleum Mr Chaturvedi, then he owes an explanation to the nation for keeping the prices of petrol and diesel artificially jacked up.

Expect a repeat round of double-digit inflation. This time they are intending to please senior citizens through higher rates of interest to be financed by inflation. But, do expect some gains in employment following the classic theory that there is a trade-off between employment and inflation.

### Nothing Rosy

**O**nce the spit and sheen of the 'India Shining' is seen in its gory colours, the economy does not appear rosy even to a diehard feelgooder. And we are not necessarily referring to the saree-stampede which the repaired and badly tottering knees, despite Ranawat and his Padma, could not keep under wraps. We are referring to the hard times ahead once the shine wears off.

This Government bragged that the growth rate had crossed 8.4% this year and they had the word of Goldman Sachs duly orchestrated by our own *desis*. The reality is already beginning to dawn. The NCAER (National Council of Applied Economic Research) has scaled down the projected growth rate for 2003-04 to 6.7%. Expect more in times to come. Increased revenue collections in direct taxes are being paraded as 'achievement'!

As for the "comfortable" foreign exchange position, all of this is "hot money" which has a tendency to fly at the flick of a button. What prevents the FII

from deserting the Indian stock markets and flying to greener pastures if they see another place as a better option?

### Sensex

**T**his tom-tomming about bullish sensex is a lot of hogwash. How can it be claimed to be an 'achievement' of the Government except for the fact that while selling the profit earning PSUs in March this year, Arun Shourie has bribed the middle classes openly and blatantly. The 5% "concession" in prices of PSU IPOs is just plain bribe. All of the five mega-issues, including ONGC, barely 2 weeks before the elections were notified were designed to purchase middle classes and along with them the brokers who are the real beneficiaries. Lakhs of new accounts have been opened by the brokers. A government of brokers, for the brokers has ended up brokering the future of the country. And has the cheek to call it India Shining!

**The employment figures are scandalous. Growth without employment can be extremely dangerous. It will build social tensions at the bottom with literally a whole "army of the unemployed" waiting to explode. Creating wealth and forgetting its purpose is something only Pretenders can do.**

### Pretensions

**T**he pretenders behaved in the initial, pre-saree, weeks, as though they have already secured 360 out of the 304 seats they are contesting. The arrogance, the haughty sureness of it all, is disgusting. Imagine neophytes like Arun Jaitley and

Pramod Mahajan haranguing the nation on how they have worked wonders for the masses. Wonder! They have not even touched the masses. They have only managed to reach about 2 million cable homes through bribes to the so-called "journalists" who are actually paid lackeys playing the Exit Poll Game.

**The three planks on which the pretenders rode to power, post-Ayodhya, were: repeal of Article 370, Uniform Civil Code and Mandir Wahin Banayenge. The first two have been given up. The last one appears only as an oral homily with courts being seized of the matter. Article 370, they realised rather late in the day, came not because India wanted it but because it was part of the Security Council resolution. Uniform Civil Code is hardly enforceable minus comprehensive redrafting of the Constitution which has to wait Venkatachaliah recommendations and their presently-impossible two-third majority. So, only the Mandir stays. But only as a token gesture. Ram was never seen so helpless as in the hands of phoney bhaktas**

There is nothing in the air, despite the much hyped exit polls, that the Pretenders are coming back with increased strength and their body language is a *pucca* give-away. If they do, they will have to keep the middle classes perpetually bribed. And, for this, they will continue to make the *kisans* exposed to suicide pangs. That's India Shining as far as the villages go. Do you still want them to return to power?

### For Your

## INFORMATION

**DECORATED:** Dr P P Singh, Vice-Chancellor of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel University of Agriculture & Technology, Meerut has been decorated with Higher Education & Development Award.

**LISTED:** The writ petition filed by the governing body of Lakshmi Bai College (University of Delhi) against the decision of the Chancellor of Delhi University, the Vice-President of India (Mr Bhairon Singh Shekhawat) reinstating Dr (Ms) Sunita Puri as Principal of the College is now listed for next hearing in Delhi High Court on 6 May.

**POSTED:** The Supreme Court of India posted the **IIM Fee Cut case** to last week of July this year on its last hearing on 8 April at the request of IIM-A because the Institute needed time to negotiate with the new Government which will be in place by that time.

**APPOINTED:** Dr S R Gupta of the Deptt of Library & Information Sciences (University of Delhi) has been appointed as Vice-Chancellor of Doon International University — one of the 150 odd "private" universities created by Chhattisgarh Government headed by Ajit Jogi. These private universities have their headquarters in the States in which they have been created but operate basically in Delhi and have substantial clientele in the capital city. These universities are hoping to be recognised by the UGC and spreading their wings abroad also what with the WTO and GATS arrangements under which education is a tradable service. Dr Gupta will take over on 5 May this year after his retirement from Delhi University on 4 May on completing 65 years including 3 years of re-employment. Ironically, he opposed re-employment vehemently filed a writ petition in Delhi High Court long before Mr T P S Chawla did but the outcome of the petition is not known.

**ELECTED:** Prof H S Virk, retired from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, was elected unanimously President of Indian Association of Physics Teachers (IAPT) in its annual meeting held in University of Delhi and Dr (Ms) Pratibha Jolly, Principal of Acharya Narendra Dev College (University of Delhi) is General Secretary of IAPT for the term 2004-2006.

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## PM Promises 2 Crores Urdu Teachers' Jobs

**T**HIS may be a slip of the tongue. Or, more likely, a casual unguarded ploy to purchase Muslim votes. Expect anything from the Pretenders both of the BJP and Congress variety as also myriad others.

The date: 22 April, Friday. The place: Kishanganj in Bihar. The Prime Minister, Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee, promised 2 crores (yes, not less) jobs of Urdu teachers in the year to come.

If this sounds bizarre think this. The total number of Muslims in India is about 12 crore. The total number of schools is no more than 3 lakhs. The total number of teachers is about 47 lakhs in all subjects. And the PM promises 2 crore Urdu teachers. Draw your own conclusions.

## Feasting, Fasting!

**I**N an article in *Hindustan Times* Utsa Patnaik of JNU has argued that food absorption (and hence, by necessary implication, availability) per capita in India has fallen to 155 kg in 1998 as against 174 in the preceding three years. And she is not talking of drought years.

Economists have their own way of interpreting data. Some may claim that it is a good sign because the food basket of the common man has undergone a change for better and higher quality but Utsa Patnaik states that the fall in absorption is mainly on account of lack of purchase power which should be enough to puncture the non-existent feel-good kind of sloganeering.

Is the analysis is correct it should be a cause of alarm even among the middle classes who are actually feeling good driving their Marutis and what not.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE \_\_\_\_\_

PIN