

# Is Girish Karnad DU's distinguished alumnus?

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By Gautam Roy

NEW DELHI, March 27

The Delhi University seems to have landed itself into some trouble over its choice of persons to be given the "Distinguished Alumni Award" during the university's platinum jubilee year.

The list of nominees, recently forwarded by a special committee formed for the purpose, apparently contains the name of a person who never graduated from the university.

The list — which comprises the names of 14 eminent persons from India and abroad — also has the name of Dr Girish Karnad, eminent theatre and film personality and national award winner, who, said sources, never received any degree from the university and, therefore, cannot be considered an alumnus of the university.

Indications are that the issue would come up for deliberations and some dust would be raised on the matter during DU's next Executive Council meeting, scheduled to take place at the end of this month.

DU stalwarts, contacted by *The Hindustan Times*, expressed their outrage at the inclusion of Dr Karnad's name. One said: "There are so many other deserving persons who could have been named. Don't names of

eminent sportspersons like Mohinder Amarnath and Deepak Wadhwa, who was at one time ranked 33rd in badminton in the world, ring a bell?"

"In the international sphere," added another prominent member of the DU alumni, "Pakistan's former President, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, too had been enrolled with the university at one time. Making him a nominee, even posthumously, would be a gesture which would have been well appreciated across the border."

Delhi University's Registrar K. K. Panda, however, said: "The list is not final. It comprises the names of the persons who have been 'recommended' for the award by the Justice R. S. Pathak committee. We are checking up on the particulars of each and every nominee and only thereafter will we give a final list."

Another senior official at the university said that "some doubt" has arisen over whether Dr Karnad ever graduated from the university as its student. Meanwhile, he added that over 10 nominees of those shortlisted by the committee — including Dr Karnad — had already sent in their letters consenting to the acceptance of the award.

The other members shortlisted by the special committee include

Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, film artiste and producer Amitabh Bachchan, veteran Parliamentarian Indrajit Gupta, Urdu poet Ali Sardar Jafri, painter Anjolie Ela Menon, industrialist and philanthropist Bharat Ram, University of Penn's renowned statistician Prof C. R. Rao, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts Chairperson Dr Kapila Vatsyayan, Member of Parliament Meira Kumar, Union Finance Secretary Montek Singh Ahluwalia, classical dancer Shovana Narain, sarod maestro Sharan Rani Backliwal and former DU Vice-Chancellor Sarup Singh.

Other sources said: "Some people believe that Dr Karnad was, for a very short time, enrolled at St Stephen's College. But, so far, nothing has emerged to give any sort of certainty to that belief."

The recently appointed Dean of Alumni Affairs, Dr Sydney R. Rebeiro, himself a Stephanian, too acknowledged that there was some uncertainty over Dr Karnad being a member of the alumni.

"I have heard that Dr Karnad was enrolled in Stephen's College for some time, but I have not been able to verify it. Besides, Stephen's does not remember him."

## DU's convocation for distinguished persons today

New Delhi, December 12

THE DELHI University is holding a special convocation tomorrow on the occasion of its Platinum jubilee for conferment of honorary degrees on 13 distinguished persons of the like of Dr Amartya Sen and Dr A P J Abdul Kalam.

The other luminaries include Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Dr Edward W Said, Dr Sarup Singh, Dr K N Raj, Dr Daisaku Ikeda, Dr John Rawls, Dr (Smt) Gangubai Hangal, Dr M N Srinivas, Sardar Raunaq Singh, Dr M S Valiathan and Dr R A Mashelkar.

On the occasion, the university's Dean, Alumni Affairs, Mr Sydney R Rebeiro, in a Press release took the opportunity to hail the contributions of two of its previous vice-chancellors—Dr K N Raj and Dr Sarup Singh—who have helped the university attain its present stature.

Mr Rebeiro informed that Dr Sarup Singh is part of the university's illustrious alumnus who went on to serve the institution in the ultimate capacity of its CEO.

"It is a matter of great pride for the university that its student, who topped the MA (English) class of 1940, also became an outstanding chief executive of his parent university," said Mr Rebeiro.

The Dean Alumni Affairs further said that as many as 45 of the university's alumni and 35 teachers have risen to be Principals, Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors of outstanding centres of learning in the country and abroad.

Dr Rebeiro said that Dr Raj was a leading light in the field of education administration in his time.

## DU special convocation today

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: Delhi University will honour 13 eminent academics, scientists and intellectuals on Sunday at a special convocation to mark the university's platinum jubilee.

University alumni affairs dean Sydney Rebeiro said the decision on these honorary degrees was approved by the academic council and the executive council.