

DU V-C to stay till successor is found

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, March 17

DELHI UNIVERSITY Vice-Chancellor, Prof Vrajendra Raj Mehta, will continue in office till his "successor is appointed and enters upon his office."

This was announced by DU Registrar, Dr K K Panda, today following a communication sent in this regard by Union Education Secretary, HRD Ministry, M K Kaw. The continuation will be under the provision of Statute 11-F (4) of Delhi University. Prof Mehta's five-year term ended today. According to University officials, the communication can be viewed as a direction from the DU Visitor who is the President of India. This is for the first time in the history of DU that a V-C has been asked to continue beyond his term of five years.

Mr Kaw's communication mentions that the continuation would be in the interest of continuity of work at the highest level in the university. It also states that the process of selection of the new V-C



DU V-C Prof V R Mehta

has already begun in earnest. As reported in *The Hindustan Times* on March 17, the HRD Ministry was of the view that the V-C should continue in office.

According to sources, on March 16, both the Secretary to the President and the HRD Ministry had asked a rather reluctant Prof Mehta to continue till a new V-C was appointed. It is believed that the V-C had expressed the need for a written direction in this regard.

It was earlier widely believed in university circles that DU Pro-Vice

Chancellor, Prof Abad Ahmed, was to officiate as acting V-C after March 17.

Prof. Mehta was honoured at a farewell function in the campus on Thursday. It is believed that the V-C had found it embarrassing and awkward that he should continue in office after the farewell function, which was attended by university teachers, students and senior functionaries. Hence, he insisted on written directions. Before the function, the V-C had made up his mind to relinquish charge on March 17.

As also reported earlier by *The Hindustan Times*, the Principal of Acharya Narendra Dev College, Dr A S Kukla, had sent a letter to the V-C on Wednesday, stating that as per the statutes, the V-C could not relinquish office till his successor was appointed.

Following this, a legal notice was sent to the V-C by another individual on the same issue. DU Registrar Dr K K Panda had also written to the Secretary to the President, asking for immediate advice and directions in the light of

the legal notice sent.

There was some debate regarding the interpretation of the statutes. The HRD Ministry's view as stated in its communications was that the first proviso under Statute 11-F (4) "clearly stipulates that not withstanding completion of a term of five years, the present Vice-Chancellor shall continue until his successor is appointed and enters upon his office."

However, there were others who felt that it is only when the Visitor specifically directs so, that the V-C can continue in office after the expiry of his term. There was also a debate on Statute 11-F (6), which states that the Pro-V-C can officiate as V-C if there is a "casual" vacancy. HRD Ministry officials seemed to regard the present situation as a permanent vacancy as opposed to a casual vacancy.

In their view, a casual vacancy would result only if the V-C attains the age of 65, or resigns or else in the event of his death. The view therefore was that the Pro-V-C could not officiate as V-C as per statutes.

Prof Mehta's contributions to university lauded

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THE LAVISH praise and compliments showered on Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Prof V R Mehta by university teachers, students, karamcharis and officials at the farewell function held in his honour on March 16 has demonstrated the unanimity of the university community in their verdict on Prof V.R. Mehta's tenure.

The representatives of several organisations, like DUTA and

DUSU, hailed the contributions of the V-C to the cause of teachers' and students' welfare and his efforts at improving the infrastructure and academic standards.

According to Mr Sydney Rebeiro, Dean of Alumni Affairs, DU, such an overwhelming reception was last given to the renowned Dr C D Deshmukh, former Union Finance Minister and V-C of DU in the 1960s. "Such a reception has demonstrated the university community's ability to transcend itself and has proven that it is one in its

perception," he said.

Vice-Chancellor Prof V R Mehta himself was a happy man. "For the past three days, I have been honoured by so many organisations in the university. It is a very satisfying feeling that one's functioning has been appreciated by so many," he told *The Hindustan Times*.

At the main farewell function held on Thursday, this was obvious. Speaking on behalf of the students, DUSU president Ritu Verma singled out the fact that the V-C was at all times accessible to

students and ever eager to listen to their concerns.

DUTA president Dr S S Rathi said that the new academic courses started at the V-C's initiative had promoted academic growth in the university. He also hailed the "able administration" of Prof Mehta.

Prof Reddy, president of the DU Principals' Association, spoke about the numerous MoUs signed with foreign universities and the efforts of the V-C in raising funds from other sources to augment funding.