

H.T. Chol. Live 7.7.013 p.1

With Azad declaration, PGI set to get hospital engg institute

Backed by plan, health minister makes announcement at golden jubilee function; 2 MBA degrees may be started

HT Live Correspondent
#chivivdsk@hindustantimes.com

CHANDIGARH: Thirty years on, the proposal of the National Institute of Healthcare Engineering and Architecture (NIHEA) may finally get concrete. Union health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on Saturday announced to start the NIHEA at the Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) here.

Azad made the declaration — the second by a health minister but this one backed by planning — at the conclusion of the institute's golden jubilee celebrations. He said the NIHEA, the first of its kind in South Asia, would offer two master degrees with help from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

Though no deadline was announced, sources said the two-year MBAs may take off by next session, and would have two specialisations: health facility planning & design, and healthcare engineering & management. While the first year would have general syllabus with some reference to specialities, second year would focus on specialisations.

The courses were proposed at the PGIMER by the then hospital engineer Dr JC Mehta, who



Health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad honouring Vice-President Hamid Ansari at the PGIMER in Chandigarh on Saturday. KESHAV SINGH/HT

is also a member of the health ministry's expert group on the issue. Standing academic committee of PGIMER gave approval in 1981. Dr Mehta, who ironically wasn't invited at the function, said, "The initiative was applauded by the WHO (World

Health Organization). Everything is set; it can be started anytime."

In 2006, at PGIMER convocation, then health minister Anbumani Ramadoss declared to start NIHEA, but with hardly anything on the ground so it didn't take off. **SEE ALSO P3**

STORY SO FAR

1972: Health ministry panel recommends hospital engg study
1981: PGIMER standing academic committee gives nod; no progress
2006: Health minister announces

to start National Institute of Healthcare Engineering and Architecture
2007: Committee led by ICMR chief for it; meet at PGIMER too
July 6, 2013: Health minister Azad makes announcement again; take-off likely next session

ON THE ANVIL

- 2 degrees: MBA
- Around 10 seats in each two-year course
- Specialisations: health facility planning & design, and healthcare engg & management

No place for the man behind the idea

Vishav Bharti

#vishav.bharti@hindustantimes.com

CHANDIGARH: The man who nurtured the idea of the National Institute of Healthcare Engineering and Administration (NIHEA) for many decades was refused invitation by the PGIMER administration to the very function that set the ball rolling for the idea to come to fruition, on Saturday.

"I begged for an invitation, but got no response," said Dr JC Mehta, 75, a former hospital engineer who remained with the PGIMER engineering wing since its inception. It was Dr Mehta



Dr JC Mehta

dream was to turn into a reality. But I am happy the PGIMER got it," said Dr Mehta, the septuagenarian, known for pushing hospital engineering as a specialty across the country. He gave written request to the PGIMER golden jubilee celebration committee chairman Dr SK Jindal, but nobody paid heed.

Asked for the reason, PGIMER spokesperson Manju Wadwalkar said, "We respect Mr Mehta a lot for his efforts but the focus of the function was the jubilee celebrations."

Local politicians did get invited.

Times Chd 8.7.13 P2

PGI doc realizes cherished dream

Shimona Kanwar | TNN

Chandigarh: It took more than three decades for Dr J C Mehta, former superintendent hospital engineer at PGI, to realize his dream. Dr Mehta had been working for the establishment of the National Institute of Healthcare Engineering and Architecture (NIHEA), which the Union health minister approved on Saturday. Interestingly, the proposal had been rejected by the same ministry which approved it after 32 years. Thanks to untiring efforts by Dr Mehta, the institute, the only one of its kind in South East Asia, will be established by next year.

Mehta's personal library is loaded with books on environmental health plan-



VISION-MAN: Dr J C Mehta

ning and a bulky file of more than 85 letters, which he was writing to authorities for the opening of the interdisciplinary institute. A pass out of the school of planning and architecture, Delhi, Mehta had been interacting with friends who have carved a niche for themselves in various fields to come as visiting faculty members for the NIHEA.

Recalling the genesis of the programme, Mehta said, "I was asked by Dr M S Randhawa, then vice chancellor of Punjab Agriculture University and then director PGI, Dr P N Chutani in 1969 to start the department of hospital engineering and planning in PGI."

Mehta pursued the health ministry, but the concept was stuck in bureaucratic files and was later dismissed. "A high power committee under the Union health ministry was set up which gave a go ahead to the program. But in 1981, after I drafted the course for the institute, the health ministry rejected it. The ministry of human resource and development, however, expressed inter-

est and agreed to fund the course," said Mehta.

He took up the issue again and personally visited the Union health minister in 2006 to convince him of the benefits of the institute in 2006. "The minister announced that the institute would be started to save the huge amount of consultation fee which hospitals outsource to engineers," said Mehta.

He has offered to guide faculty members of PGI, but no one has asked him to offer his services for free. "Medicos lack vision. I can start the course in a day provided I get the approval and some space to sit. My friends in BITS, Mesra, SPA and IIT Roorkee have agreed to come as visiting faculty."