

Academics voice concern over NEP

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Yadav said: "The real crisis is a new hegemonic empire that is being foisted on us. You acquire hegemony not through army or coercion, you acquire hegemony by capturing ideas."

Resistance to "this control of the idea", he said, has to come from the campuses. "The NEP talks about 'Bharatiyakaran'. Now what is this 'Bharatiyakaran' actually? It is obvious that what we are looking at is the communalisation of education at the core. 'Bharatiyakaran' is not about India, the Indian knowledge system, the attainments in the field of knowledge through Indian history from the ancient past through the medieval period into the modern period, but focuses specifically on the ancient period... This needs to be the communalisation, rather than seeing it as idiosyncrasies," Mahalakshmi said.

She sought to argue that this attempt at communalisation through education creates a mindset that, in turn, leads to an environment where an RPF jawan does not hesitate to kill passengers because of their religious identity.



R. Mahalakshmi, professor at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, speaks at the convention on Tuesday.

"It is also the reason why today on a train somebody picks up a gun and shoots passengers because they do not fit with the idea of Bharat that this person carries in his head. All of these are linked to the kind of education that we are offering. Therefore, when we talk about the challenges in higher education, we cannot de-link it," Mahalakshmi said. Vallabh said: "The biggest challenge before us now is I always say this, is that the National Education Policy should have one chapter: on how to unlearn national WhatsApp University messages because that is creating the biggest damage to us. What kind of education and crisis we are talking about when a so-called educated person on a moving train sees the Aadhaar card and sees that he is from a different religion and shoots him. Forget about the NEP, we need NBP - National Brotherhood Policy."

Bengal education minister Brata Basu said the crisis in Bengal's higher education stemmed from the Bengal governor's attempt to establish his hegemony on campus by appointing VCs without consulting his department. The convention was hosted by a platform of former vice-chancellors of Bengal's state-aided universities.

IN BRIEF

Buddha 'alert'

Calcutta: Former chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, 78, was "alert" and he spoke to doctors and visitors on Wednesday, according to a statement issued by Woodlands Hospital, where he is being treated. His "overall clinical status remains stable". Bhattacharjee was admitted to the hospital last Saturday with lower respiratory tract infection.

Pedestrian injured

Central Avenue: A pedestrian was injured after being hit by a scooter on Central Avenue, in front of Mahajati Sadan, on Wednesday afternoon. He is being treated at hospital. The rider fled.

ACHARYA PRAFULLA CHANDRA RAY MEMORIAL LECTURE



A leading chemical engineer paid tribute to the father of Indian chemistry - Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861-1944) - at a packed auditorium on Wednesday. "I think it was the first time in the history of chemistry that a university professor became an entrepreneur. After him, there have been many. But he was the first example," Man Mohan Sharma, 86, in picture, emeritus professor of eminence at the Mumbai-based Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, said. Sharma was talking about Ray, a researcher, a teacher, an entrepreneur and a firm believer in India's freedom from British rule. Wednesday was his 162nd birth anniversary. In 1892, with a paltry capital, Ray started Bengal Chemical Works, which in 1901 became Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works Ltd, India's first pharmaceutical company. Sharma was speaking at the 21st Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray Memorial Lecture, organised by the Indian Chemical Council, the apex body of all sectors of chemical and allied industries, at Sister Nivedita University, New Town. The second lecture was delivered by Souvik Bhattacharyya, senior vice-president, TCG Centres for Research and Education in Science and Technology, Calcutta. Bhattacharyya had previously served as vice-chancellor of BITS Pilani and Jadavpur University, and as dean and deputy director of IIT Kharagpur. He spoke on "corporate engagement in higher education".

Picture by Bishwarup Dutta

Tales of courage, confidence

JHINKU MAZUMDAR

Calcutta: Members of a small, dwindling community came together to celebrate World Anglo-Indian Day on Wednesday in a town...

The day was marked by prayer services in churches and special assemblies or short programmes in schools to speak about the community's lived home.

Barry O'Brien, president-in-chief of the All India Anglo-Indian Association, drew the attention of the community and others to the contribution of Anglo-Indian women, who stepped out of their homes more than 100 years ago to earn a living.

While those from other communities lived home more than a hundred years ago, the Anglo-Indian woman stepped out of her home with a handbag full of courage and a valour full of confidence to earn an honest living... She pioneered the movement for the emancipation of women in India via activism and protest but by sheer determination to go out and work, O'Brien said in an online message for the community.



World Anglo-Indian Day celebrations at Assembly of God Church School on Park Street on Wednesday. Pictures by Bishwarup Dutta



Gillian Rosemary Hart, a former school principal, said the number of Anglo-Indians in the city may be small, but they "are united". "As long as we are united we can do a lot for our country in education or any other field. Currently, there is so much division and disharmony in our country... it will be united," said Hart, who was thrice nominated to the Assembly to represent the community.

"We always speak about the diversity of India and we and other communities are that diverse part that makes our country different from other countries," Hart told Metro. Hart attended a programme organised by the Bengal chapter of the Association of Heads of Anglo-Indian Schools in India at the Assembly of God Church School on Wednesday evening. "It gives us an idea of how

many Anglo-Indians are there in our institutions," Terence John, secretary of the association, said at the programme. "The day is significant because it marks the coming together of the community and reminds others of the contribution of the community in every field..."

The school heads discussed ways to encourage more Anglo-Indian students to join the teaching profession. Like the community itself, the number of Anglo-Indian teachers in schools is also dwindling.

Terence Ireland, principal, St James' School, said: "... earlier about 75 per cent of our teachers would be Anglo-Indians and almost all in the junior school. Now we have less than 10 per cent..."

At Loreto House, students performed a skit where they enacted interviewing Ruskin Bond, Rudyard Kipling and others.

"The day is not just about song and dance but understanding the greatest contribution (of Anglo-Indians), which has been in the field of education," said Aruna Gomes, principal of Loreto House.

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DEAR WEEKLY LOTTERY. SOUTH 24 PARGANAS RESIDENT. BENGAL has won Rs. 1 Crore as first prize in Dear Weekly Lottery in the draw held on 14.06.2023. His winning ticket number is 92D3573. He has submitted his prize winning ticket along with the prize claim form to the Nodal Officer, Nagaland State Lotteries located at Kolkata. "Winning of One Crore rupees of prize money by way of spending a few tens of rupees is something magical and very interesting too. All my heartfelt thanks to Dear Lottery and Nagaland State Lotteries for making me a Crorepati at this juncture", said the winner.

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