Message from Chairman ERDF

The Education Research & Development Foundation (ERDF) has today emerged as the fastest growing education network of the North East. In keeping with its motto 'KG to PG', ERDF has penetrated the nooks and corners of the region to enable the people to gain access to high quality education at their doorstep. The journey over the years has not been very smooth or even, at times it was extremely challenging and difficult, but we are happy when we look back now ERDF today runs some of the best educational institutions of the region that can be compared well with their peers elsewhere in the country. Students who have already passed out from our institutions are now placed in responsible positions across the country, some are even placed overseas and excelling in their respective positions there. They are our ambassadors, they are our brand images and we are indeed proud of them. We are also proud of and grateful to the entire family of ERDF who have stuck along with us over the years and without whose dedication and support we would not have reached this far.

The Government of India, through its many announcements and policy notifications, has made it clear that educating India is a stupendous task. Government alone cannot meet this challenge. The private sector has to come up in a big way to fill this void. As a result, during the last few years we have seen the emergence of quite a few outstanding private players in the field of education who have been contributing their mite in enabling the country bring about a revolution in the education sector. Side by side, we have also seen the entry of quite a few fake players who have entered the sector for making easy money by duping students with the promise of degrees in courses for which they do not even have the minimum infrastructure or by dishing out PhDs not entitled for them. These fraud institutions have brought a bad name for all private players working sincerely in the field of education. The society as a whole needs to differentiate between the fake and the genuine institutions besides keeping a vigil on the cheats who put the future of our youth in jeopardy by their nefarious activities.

I appeal to all members of the ERDF family and well wishers of ERDF to contribute whole heartedly for enriching the ERDF Newsletter so that it becomes a bond of communication and camaraderie between the Foundation and its stakeholders.

Mahbubul Hoque
Chairman, ERDF

Edupreneur Award 2013

ERDF Chairman Mahbubul Hoque receives prestigious Edupreneur award 2013

Chairman of ERD Foundation, Mahbubul Hoque on February 15, 2013 received Edupreneurs' Award 2013 given by Engineering Watch Indi'a's most prestigious magazine dedicated to engineering community. Hoque was given the award for his extraordinary work in the field of technical education in North East during the last ten years.

Hoque, who has established a chain of technical institutions in North East, particularly in Assam and Meghalaya in just ten years, was selected for the award by a jury of eminent academicians including VCs of five Government technical universities and professionals at a meeting on January 30, 2013 at Constitution Club of India, New Delhi.

Members of the jury that selected Hoque for the award consisted of: Dr. M Moni, Deputy Director General, National Informatics Centre Department of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and IT; Prof. Shashi K Dhimane, Vice-Chancellor, Himachal Pradesh Technical University; Prof. S. K. Bandopadhyaya, Vice-Chancellor, West Bengal University of Technology; Prof. P. B. Sharma, Vice-Chancellor, Delhi Technological University; Sushil Singh, Member Parliament, Government of India; Prof. KL Chopra, Indian National Academy of Engineering (INA); Dr. Sandhya Chintala, Executive Director, Sector Skill Council NASSCOM; Dr. R K Khandaal, Vice-Chancellor, Gautam Buddha Technical University; Vishnu R Dudas, Managing Director, Nucleus Software Exports Ltd; Dr. Gita Rawat, Joint Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises; and Prof RP Yadav, Vice-Chancellor, Rajasthan Technical University.

Shri Shashi Tharoor, Union Minister for HRD, was the chief guest at the function in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi where Hoque was handed over the award.
100% success gives Central Public School Patharkandi a place on top

The first batch students of Central Public School, Patharkandi in Barak Valley of Assam, run by ERD Foundation Guwahati, achieved 100 per cent success rate in the Class X CBSE examination, the result of which was announced in May 2013. All 48 students who appeared in the examination passed with flying colours. 37 students out of 48 passed in the first division while remaining 11 students passed in the second division. Two students secured distinction marks and nine students secured star marks. The students of the class also secured 42 letter marks in different subjects (Mathematics-4, Science -10, Social Science-10, English-11, Hindi-7).

It is to be mentioned here that ERD Foundation, Guwahati had established the Central Public School Patharkandi in 2008 to give quality education to the deprived poor rural students under CBSE course and to empower them to make a mark in their career. The result of the first batch students has vindicated the conviction of ERD Foundation and the foundation is now committed to rededicate itself to achieve its goal of bringing quality education to the doorstep of rural students of backward areas of Assam. The ERDF has also established a Central Public School at Badarpur in 2010 and is going to establish a good number of such schools in rural areas of Assam as per its vision plan.

In the meanwhile ERDF has taken steps to prepare the first batch students of CPS Patharkandi for the entrance tests for admission to IITs, NITs and other various engineering colleges and professional courses and has appointed a B Tech teacher to teach the students for such entrance tests. Also a team of experienced and qualified faculty members selected from Barak Valley as well as Guwahati which includes one retired ACS officer are joining shortly to teach and guide the students in class XI.

The experienced teachers and professionals will identify the talents of the students from class XI onwards and suitably counsel them for right career including engineering, medical, civil services according to their natural aptitude and talent. The talented but financially weak students of CPS Patharkandi will be imparted coaching for IAS and other civil services free of cost in the Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Centre for Coaching & Guidance, Guwahati run by the foundation.

World Environment Day

World Environment Day celebrated by USTM

The University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya (USTM), run by ERD Foundation, organised an awareness rally and sapling plantation drive on the occasion of World Environment Day on June 5, 2013. The rally which was the highlight of the day, with about 250 students participating with colourful placards and slogans written on them, started from the Ganesh Mandir near 9th Mile and ended at 9th Mile, CRPF, 2nd Gate. A sapling plantation drive was also held in 9th Mile and inside the USTM campus by the students and faculty.

Prof. H P Sarma, HoD, Dept of Environmental Sciences, Gauhati University interacted with the students of USTM and delivered a talk on the topic 'Environmental Consequences of Human Interference'.

“For more than 4 decades we are celebrating it but very few people actually know about World Environment day”, said Prof. Chandan Mahanta, Dept of Civil Engineering, IIT, Guwahati who also had an interaction with the students of the University.

A documentary “And The Friends of Kaziranga” produced and directed by renowned film-maker and sound engineer Kaaju was also screened on the occasion.
International Seminar on Folklore hosted at USTM

A two day International Seminar on the topic- "Genres of Belief from a Folkloristic Perspective" was hosted by University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya (USTM) during February 4-5, 2013. This seminar was organised by School of Media Sciences and Cultural Studies (USTM) in association with the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, Estonia. Prof. Ülo Valk, Professor of Estonian and Comparative Folklore and Vice President, ISFNR on whose initiative the programme was organised stated that its aim "is to discuss current research in belief narratives and other genres of belief, magic and vernacular religion in general. The range of cultures to be covered is wide, extending from Estonia to Belarus and Ukraine, from Russia to Mongolia and China, from Ireland to USA and Australia, from Latvia to India and Bangladesh." In his keynote address, the Secretary, International Seminar on "Genres of Belief from a Folkloristic Perspective" and Dean School of Media Sciences and Cultural Studies, USTM Dr Dinesh Baishya stated that "a state of cultural holocaust is prevailing in most indigenous societies, where a deplorable socio-economic and cultural situation threatens people." He called the NE India as "folkloric heaven" but declared that the rich body of folkloristic knowledge of the NE is declining at a rapid rate and may die a silent death in the near future. He went on to describe some folkloric magical beliefs in communities living in NE states like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam etc. Further he stressed on the need for preservation of these indigenous cultures. All together 60 papers were read out by scholars from various parts of the world during the two days of the Seminar.

North East Teachers' Congress & National Seminar
organised by University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya (USTM)

The North East Teachers' Congress (NETC), first of its kind in NE India, followed by a national seminar on "Indian Higher Education in the 21st century: Constraints & Possibilities" organised by USTM on March 22-23, 2013 was held at Regional Institute of Science and Technology (RIST), 9th Mile. The programme was aimed at giving the College Teachers a platform to discuss various issues, problems and prospects in the context of emerging educational environment in the country.

Educational environments are changing rapidly as today's generation of students grow up with technologies, such as video conferencing, powerpoint presentations and other IT related skills as well as applications. In this context NETC 2013 provided a platform for the teachers to deliberate, interact and enrich themselves.

The North East Teachers' Congress was attended by more than 300 College Teachers from the North Eastern states. The inaugural session of the Teachers Congress was graced by Prof. Umesh Ch Sarma, Vice-Chancellor of Srimanta Sankardev University of Health Sciences as the Chief Guest. A few other dignitaries who addressed the NETC were Prof Sai Prakash and Prof. Ratan Tokey from Osmania University, Prof N K Chaudhury, Prof Kulendu Pathak, Prof PG Rao, Dr L Sahu, Dr R K Sharma, Dr. Dinesh Baishya, Dr Ashwini Baruah, Prof Mrinal Kumar Das, Dr UC Kalita, Dr U R Dhar, Dr Balendra Kr Das, Prof PJ Das, Prof ANS Ahmed, Dr H K Baruah, Dr CR Sarkar, Prof Aloka Sharma and Mr PJ Baruah
National Science Day observed at USTM

University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM) celebrated the National Science Day with day-long activities on February 28, 2013. Dr. D N Buragohain, the Founder Director of IIT, Guwahati and present Chancellor, Nagaland University was the chief guest on the occasion and Dr. N K Choudhury, former VC, Gauhati University and Principal Adviser to ERDF Foundation presided over the function. Also present in the occasion were the Chancellor of USTM M. Hoque, Vice Chancellor (acting) Dr. R K Sharma, Deans of various Schools, faculty members and students of the University.

The main attraction of the celebration was a student of Mechanical 2nd sem of RIST, Kaushalendra Singh who made a presentation on 'Teleportation, an innovative theory' developed by him. Recently IIT Kharagpur has announced to sponsor this research initiative for further advancement. His initiative was appreciated and he was felicitated by Dr. DN Buragohain and Dr. NK Choudhury.

In the day-long activities, a science exhibition and a debate competition were organised. The theme of the debate was "Genetically modified crops have an adverse effect on food security in India". Yuvraj Bhandari from USTM, Anindita Das from RIST and Bidisha Das from USTM won the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes respectively in the debate competition.

Kaushalendra Singh, BTech student of RIST being felicitated by Dr. D.N. Buragohain, Founder Director IIT-G, Dr. N.K. Choudhury, former VC, Gauhati University & M. Hoque Chancellor USTM on the occasion of National Science Day for his innovative effort in developing Teleportation Theory organised at University of Science & Technology

Jyotika and Maitreyee won the 1st prize; Bidisha, Chayanika, Yuvraj and Kaushik won the 2nd prize and Nirdesh, Simanta, Jolly, Ambarish and Koj won the 3rd prize in the Scientific Model Exhibition.

Assam's Fardina Adil felicitated for success in IAS

Umme Fardina Adil, a resident of Hatigaon in Guwahati, was felicitated by ERDF and other organisations on May 12, 2013 for her success in the IAS examination the results of which were announced recently.

Mahbubul Hoque, Chairman ERDF, informed the audience that the entrance test and interview of minority candidates for IAS coaching for the IAS exam of 2014 was conducted at the same venue i.e. Regional College of Higher Education (RCHE) in the morning. It was organised by Zakat Foundation of India (ZFI) and coordinated by ERDF. The felicitation for Fardina was arranged in the afternoon to facilitate an interaction of her with all the aspiring IAS candidates of 2014 who were also present at the venue.

Umme Fardina Adil, successful IAS candidate, is seen with Mahbubul Hoque, Chairman ERDF; HN Das, former Chief Secretary of Assam; and Prof PK Abdul Azis, VC, University of Science & Technology Meghalaya at a function in Guwahati

CORTNE 2013
(Conference on Road and Transportation Technologies for NE Region)

A Conference on Road and Transportation Technologies for NE Region (CORTNE 2013) was organised by CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CSIR-CRRI), New Delhi and CSIR-North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR-NEIST), Jorhat along with PWDs of all eight states of the North-East Region. The conference was held from February 22 to 24, 2013 at Maniram Dewan Trade Centre, Guwahati. ERDF Foundation led by Mahbubul Hoque, as Welcome Partner and FINER as Industry Partner joined hands in this endeavour to make it a grand success.
'Esplendidez 2013' hosted by RIST

SS Hajong, Chief Public Relations Officer, NF Railway unfurled the institute flag on May 2, 2013 to mark the inauguration of RIST's first Techno Fest, aptly named as 'Esplendidez 2013.' Speaking as the chief guest on the occasion, Hajong, who is himself an alumnus of Assam Engineering College, shared some of his unforgettable experiences while in college. He said, "Demand for engineers has been growing in India due to fast economic development of the country. It is encouraging that state of the art institutes have come up within the NE region to prepare our boys and girls to take up this challenge."

Syed Mohsin Raza, social media consultant, deliberated as an appointed speaker and let his young audience know that 40 per cent of recruiters use the twitter, 53 per cent facebook and an awesome 87 per cent use the linked-in services while selecting personnel for their organisations. Raza said, therefore, it was desirable that every young person have a linked-in account and keep optimising it on an ongoing basis.

Mahbubul Hoque honoured in Kerala

Mahbubul Hoque, Chairman ERDF Foundation, & Chancellor, University of Science & Technology Meghalaya (USTM), was invited to visit Kerala during the third week of December 2012 for his felicitation as well as for discussion with various educational societies there to plan out joint projects for implementation in the North East. On December 16, the Human Care Foundation felicitated Hoque for setting up a number of educational institutions for higher and technical education in the North East.

P Sulaiman, Chairman of HCF, speaking on the occasion at Hotel Asma Tower in Kozhikode made a special mention of Hoque's laudable initiative for educational rehabilitation of students who were affected by the violence of BTAD in 2012.

Conclave on Minority Educational Institutions (COMEI) hosted at RIST

The Conclave on Minority Educational Institutions (COMEI) of NE India was inaugurated on April 30, 2013 with a two-day programme. Organised by ERDF at the RIST auditorium on the outskirts of Guwahati, it is aimed at preparing a road map for promoting modern education in North East India.

After the welcome speech from Mahbubul Hoque, Chairman ERDF, Dr P A Fazal Ghafoor, a front ranking neuro-surgeon of the country and President Muslim Education Society (MES), Kerala was honoured with the 'Doyen of Education Award' by ERDF at the inaugural session. The award was given in recognition of Dr Ghafoor's contribution to the cause of education in India.

30 outstanding principals, teachers, educational institutions, and NGOs working in the field of education were honoured with 'Edu Promo' Award on the occasion.
28 outstanding personalities from the minority community were handed over Community Leadership Award 2013 by K Rahman Khan, Union Minister for Minority Affairs at a glittering function at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati on April 2, 2013. The event was organised by ERD Foundation.

Among the recipients of the Award were Dr MLA Rahman, a renowned doctor of Guwahati who has till date performed over 12,000 neuro surgeries which in itself is a record for the region and Dr Anwaruddin Chowdhury IAS, known as the 'Birdman of Assam' for his research and published work in the field of wildlife preservation.

Speaking on the occasion, Khan said, “Muslims must be proud to be Indians and they must also realise that every Muslim in India is capable of pursuing the highest position in each walk of life.” He lauded the lead taken by Mohbbub Hoque, Chairman ERDF, in this direction and said that Hoque’s strides are in fulfillment of the dreams of two other great Indians Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and APJ Abdul Kalam.

On April 3, 2013, the Union Minister, accompanied by the Union Minister of State for Minority Affairs, Ninong Ering visited the University of Science & Technology Meghalaya (USTM) and laid the foundation of Prof K Siddique Hasan Academic Block that would accommodate the School of Management Sciences of the University. On this occasion, Khan reminded the gathering that education is the priority of the Union Government and it expects India to become the education hub of the whole world by the year 2020.

Every year, at the onset of the New Year, ERD Foundation felicitates outstanding citizens of the State. Outstanding contributors to the society from different streams of activities are selected for this purpose every year. In 2010, social workers were honoured while in 2011 it was the turn of the former Vice-Chancellors of Universities of the North East to receive the honours from ERDF. Outstanding litterateurs were honoured by the Foundation in January 2012.

This year, the Foundation had decided to accord recognition to some outstanding senior citizens of the State who have served the society in different capacities and continue to extend their support to various initiatives in spite of their growing years. The eminent senior citizens who were selected for felicitation by ERDF were Nirupama Bongohain (literature), Abdul Majid (films), Prof Md Taher (education), Hare Krishna Deka (police), Abdul Malik (administration), H N Das (administration), A K Mazumder (social service), B K Nath (media), D N Barua (engineering), H Talukdar (social service) and D N Singh (press). The felicitation function was held on January 3, 2013 at the Auditorium of Regional Institute of Science & Technology (RIST) at 9th Mile, opposite CRPF Group Centre, GS Road. Books authored by Dr Dinesh Baishya and Dr Debajit Saikia were also unveiled at the same function.
New Vice Chancellor joins USTM

Prof. P. K. Abdul Azis, formerly the Vice-Chancellor of two prestigious universities has joined the University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya as its new Vice-Chancellor. A distinguished scientist and administrator of repute, he served as the Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University from 2007-2012. He was the man instrumental in giving Aligarh Muslim University a pan-Indian Character by establishing campus of AMU in Kerala and West Bengal. He rejuvenated the academic ambiance of AMU and made a huge turn around enabling the University to scale the ladder of academic excellence. As the Vice-Chancellor of Cochin University of Science & Technology, during 2004 to 2007, Prof. Azis provided effective leadership in regaining the S&T focus of the University. He played a pivotal role in getting the proposal approved to upgrade CUSAT to the level of IIEST (Indian Institute of Engineering Science & Technology).

He received the MES Excellence Award for lifetime contribution to Higher Education and Social Welfare in 2012. He received the Mother Teresa Lifetime Achievement and International Award from the Mother Teresa International Award Committee, Kolkata for contribution to the field of Higher Education.

Prof. Azis has 35 years of extremely productive and dynamic academic career working in the Kerala Agricultural University as Assistant Professor, in the University of Kerala as Professor and as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Department of Ecology and Marine Biology at SWCC in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. His work in the field of desalination has been recognised internationally. The University of Kerala awarded the coveted degree of Doctor of Science (D. Sc.) for his contributions in the field of ecology. He is presently the Chairman of the Expert Committee for Revision of Curriculum for school education appointed by the Govt of Kerala.

Dr PG Rao joins as Pro-Chancellor, USTM

Former Director, CSIR-NEIST (formerly RRL) Jorhat Dr PG Rao has on May 27, 2013 formally joined as the new Pro-Chancellor (Honorary) of University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya (USTM) in presence of M Hoque, Chancellor & Dr RK Sharma, Pro-VC of the University along with other high level officials. Dr Rao is a B Tech in Chemical Engineering from REC (NIT), Warangal, M Tech in Chemical Plant Design from IIT, Madras, Ph D from IIT, Madras in the area of Polymer Engineering. Dr Rao occupied various positions at CSIR-NEIST and CSIR-CLRI, before attaining the position of Director of CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat (2002-2012). Dr Rao has 92 publications in international journals, 34 in Indian journals, 70 papers presented in national and international seminars, 8 patents (sealed), 3 copy rights, 1 book and 9 chapters in books to his credit. USTM is very much hopeful that his expertise will help to improve the performance of the University especially in the field of research & development.

ERDF supports UGC programme for civil services training in minority area

A career counselling programme on national administrative services was organised by Nabajyoti College, Kalagachia in Barpeta District under UGC sponsored coaching classes for entry into civil services on Saturday. The programme was organised in collaboration with ERD Foundation. Addressing over 200 students from different educational institutions of the area who had assembled to take part in the programme, HN Das, former Chief Secretary, Govt of Assam and Director, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Centre for Coaching & Guidance Guwahati, said, “Today there are many students who have the required knowledge, their family is in possession of money, but because of lack of guidance and counselling, they cannot make it to the IAS, ACS or other central and state services available before them.” Das narrated his own example about four decades ago when he had to prepare for the IAS exams and there were no books or coaching centres available in Guwahati. He had to travel to Delhi several times for procuring the required books and he was his own coach.
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