

2003(42)

Deccan Herald

12/10/03

# *ICHR nostalgic about Dharwad scholar*

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DH News Service

NEW DELHI, Oct 11

Ever since things in Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) were bogged down by politics and intrigue, the staffers here have felt nostalgic about the constructive academic work done by its former chairman from Karnataka.

An historian from Dharwad, Prof S Settar, who was appointed chairman, ICHR in 1996 when H D Deve Gowda was the prime minister, ran the ICHR with professionalism. Apart from stream-

lining the administration and research funding, Prof Settar resumed publication of quarterly "Historical Review", dug up manuscripts and got them published.

During Prof Settar's tenure, merit and equity prevailed in the ICHR. All employees and scholars were contended with the fair deal they received from him. During his tenure Wg Cdr Dr Sushil Kumar, a military history scholar, who was working as chief administrative officer in ASTE (Aircraft System Testing Establishment), IAF, Bangalore was selected as ICHR director.

Dr Sushil Kumar, now under suspension, earned the distinction of being the first pilot who was a scholar. Every year on Republic Day, his message is broadcast on All India Radio calling upon personnel of defence forces to maintain their interest in academics by keeping "books along with weapons be they in the cockpit, trenches or the ship". As they retire early, they have to take up second career later.

Prof Settar's three-year tenure, which ended in September 1999, was not extended due to change in the Union government. The problems began when

Prof B R Grover was appointed chairman for three-year tenure in October 1999. When Prof Grover died in office on May 10, 2001, Prof K S Lal, who took over as ad hoc chairman and was subsequently removed after 47 days, wanted to continue till the unexpired term of his predecessor as per the ICHR rules 8 and 9.

Then Prof M G S Narayanan was made chairman from July 4, 2001. Chairman is first amongst members of the Council and Rule 9 says that any vacancy caused due to death or resignation shall be filled for the unexpired term of the tenure. In fact,

the tenure of Prof Narayanan ended in October 2002 but he is continuing in violation of ICHR rules, sources said.

In one of the ICHR matters, even the Delhi High Court had to comment that everything was not well in ICHR and orders were passed from time to time flouting the rules at the whims and fancies of the persons at the helm of affairs.

Claiming autonomy, Mr Narayanan did not accept the appointment of Prof Kapil Kumar as member-secretary appointed by the HRD Ministry. He has written to all the universities to

send names for the post instead of advertising the job in major dailies as is done by ICPR, ICSSR and several other autonomous bodies.

It is the prerogative of the ministry to appoint director or member-secretary, ministry officials said, adding that the government is likely to take a tough stand in view of "open defiance" by Prof Narayanan.

Prof Kapil said Dr Sushil Kumar was suspended under a "pre-planned conspiracy" in order to promote an insider who could hold both the offices of director and member-secretary.