



EC SUNIL ARORA WAS THE MAIN SPEAKER, HIGHLIGHTED CONTRIBUTIONS OF MEHTA IN THE MAKING OF PROGRESSIVE RAJASTHAN

Legends remember the legend of Mehta

Avanindra Mishra

Jaipur: The third M.L. Mehta memorial Oration was the perfect occasion to relive the glorious past of Rajasthan bureaucracy. Senior bureaucrats of yester years who contributed in shaping the state of today all congregated to remember the architect of progressive Rajasthan - former chief secretary ML Mehta. Star-officers of past Anil Kumar, Arun Kumar, Narendra Sisodiya Inderjeet Khanna, C S Rajan and Krishna Bhatnagar to name a few descended at Rajasthan State Institute of Public Administration (RIPA) to relive the bonding they had shared during their hey days. Few existing senior bureaucrats were also seen exchanging notes and seeking tips from their seniors at the Officers Training School.

with M.L. Mehta, with whom he worked closely during Bhairon Singh Shekhawat's government.

"I was secretary to CM and he was the chief secretary. I can't forget efficient working style and learnings I had. Mehta's relationship with Bhairon Singhji was unmatched. Both of them had true respect for each other and they both used to think about reaching the last mile while implementing any policy," he said.

Former secretary to Vice president of India Anil Kumar, who chaired the oration said that Mehta was an institution in himself. He said that Mehta more than a senior, remained a trainer. The role of trainer was more apparent for Mehta than holding any other prestigious offices during his illustrious career.

"It was all because of that instinct even after superannuation Mehta continued to work for promotion of the latent talent within the society," he said.

Director general of RIPA Gurjot Kaur, M.L. Mehta's son and daughter Sunil Mehta and Rashmi Jain also remem-



EC Sunil Arora (2nd from Right) shares stage with Anil Kumar, Former Secy to VP, India (R), Gurjot Kaur, DG RIPA and son of Late ML Mehta, Rakesh Mehta (L). —SUMAN SARKAR/DNA

bered Mehta and his life. Before start of the programme, DNA Editor Jagdeesh Chandra welcomed Sunil Arora.

Meanwhile, Arora, speaking for the first time in his new role of Election Commissioner, said that the country can progress only when policies are made and implemented keeping in mind the needs of middle class. He said that statistics stand witness

to growth of the country, yet, socio economic disparities continue to remain challenge for governance and policy makers of the country.

"It is only appropriate for us to, every once in a while, step back from our localised trials and tribulations and asks what is going to define India for the medium term?" he asked.

As he held that the country indeed has evolved in a

'regional', if not a global giant with a treasure trove of statistics including GDP growth, investment levels, foreign exchange reserves, number of billionaires, number of unicorn start-ups, improvement in health and literacy parameters of now vs three decades back conveniently validating the idea. He expressed concern on lost focus and empathy for the

much larger middle class.

"For India to peak; its human capital should be nurtured and harnessed much more. This, implies taking a fresh holistic outlook aiming not just to improve statistics but also qualitative aspects of development. A good starting framework to target this problem would be to look at income inequality," he implied.

In its support, he quoted the latest annual Global Wealth Report of Credit Suisse, which states that 'while wealth has been rising in India, not everyone has shared in this growth'. This has resulted in 92 per cent of adult population with wealth below Rs 6.5 lakh while 0.5 per cent population has net worth of Rs 65 lakh.

Arora, 1980 batch Rajasthan cadre officer had contributed his bit in the development of new Rajasthan. In his career spanning over 35 years, he held important posts irrespective of parties in government. His style of working has left many followers in current bureaucracy of the state.

Allegations part of democratic setup: EC

Election commissioner Sunil Arora is not offended with the allegations of tampering with electronic voting machines, even as he rejected the allegations he held such allegations part of the democratic process. "Even as I have only been appointed election commissioner few months back, EVM have now been use for more than a decade and they can not be tampered with," said Sunil Arora to DNA.

However, he upheld the right of those to question the integrity. "In a democratic setup people have right to question, we will answer them," he added on a light note. Integrity of the EVM has once again came in questions after few political parties to have performed poorly at the recent local body elections in Uttar Pradesh blamed 'hijacking' of EVM for their loss. The question is also being raised as Gujarat goes for assembly polls from Friday and the machines will once again be used to decide the government of state.

The EC, however, assured



ON INTEGRITY!

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of efforts being made by the election commission to keep confidence of public intact in the voting technology with use of VVPAT machines. An IAS of 1980 batch of Rajasthan cadre, Sunil Arora was appointed as election commissioner this September and was in Jaipur to address a memorial oration.