



Said they had been shortchanged earlier

Lalit Kumar | TNN

Greater Noida: The violent confrontation in Noida between the police and the farmers, which has given the political rivals of Mayawati a handle to beat her with, has its roots in the decision to acquire 1,400 hectares of land

in eight villages in 2006.

According to Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) chairman, Lalit Srivastava, "At that time, the compensation payable for the land was about Rs 382 per square metre. And all those whose land was acquired had accepted the compensation voluntarily. But, the compensation in the area was on April 1 last year increased by the government to Rs 850 per square metre. Now, the farmers want this rate. And, if we concede this demand, we will open a Pandora's Box."

So, Srivastava said, they had set up a committee, headed by the district magistrate, to decide on an amount that would be fair.

"The committee said the farmers could be paid another Rs 200 per square metre as ex gratia payment. This would avert the possibility of others asking for the enhanced rates."

But, he said, the farmers refused to accept this agreement. "Now, if what they are asking for is proper, they could have gone to court. But they have chosen to resort to violence," he said.

But a farmer from Ghorī Bachhera village, who didn't wish to be identified, said: "We had not agreed to the rate we were given when our property was acquired. It was forced down our throats. Now, we insist on getting Rs 850 per square metre. And, we will not settle for anything less."

Manoj Tripathi of Ghorī Bachhera said, "The idea in raising the compensation was that the poor farmer should not be shortchanged. So, cut-off dates and other rigmarole means nothing."

As the UP government acquires more and more land for its developmental work and housing projects, it can expect more such situations. With land prices skyrocketing and investors making a killing later, farmers are bound to feel shortchanged. And this issue will become a political hot potato.

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Vacant SC/ST seats in new IITs not to be filled this year

(Source: Times of India, Delhi, 14th August 2008)

In Old IITs, Preparatory Classes Will Be Larger Than Previous Year

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Mumbai: The six new IITs will not have any SC/ST student this year. The 66 vacancies for them (19 for SCs and 47 for STs) will now be filled next year, over and above the prescribed quota. No decision, however, has been taken on the 68 vacant seats in the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad and 14

empty slots in IT-BHU (IT school in the Benaras Hindu University).

Meanwhile, preparatory classes in the old IITs will be larger than previous years. The number of students admitted to the year-long preparatory course is based on the vacancy of reserved category seats in each

Nehruvian style of institution building, the IITs have also decided to reach out to Indian researchers and engineers abroad to come back and join the new IITs. "In the 1950's, jobs were offered in canteens and offices. We have a goal of hiring 3,000 teachers over the next three years. We have decided to reach out to 50,000 engineers/researchers all over the world. Even if 500 come, it would be fine," Sanjay Dhande, director of IIT, Kanpur, said after a meeting of the IIT heads here on Wednesday.

He also said it was payback time for the seven old IITs by mentoring the six new ones. Dhande said the vacancies of SC/STs of Joint Entrance Examination 2008 in the six new IITs would be made available for the admission exercise of 2009 as a one-time measure.

This year, 3.11 lakh students took the JEE this year for 6,992 seats in 13 IITs. Of these, 414 seats were reserved for ST candidates, but only 159 were shortlisted. Similarly, only 690 were shortlisted for the 832 SC seats. The OBC figures were 1,099 out of 1,134.

The IIT directors also said all attempts are being made to ensure that the brand equity of the institutes does not get diluted. Dhande said the new IITs had some of the best teachers. "When the existing IITs started in the 1950s, they were mentored by foreign countries. Now we are in a position to mentor the new IITs. We are not cutting corners in ensuring quality. The best existing teachers are going to these institutes," Dhande said. Ashok Misra, director of IIT, Mumbai, said the 40 shortlisted candidates for faculty positions in IIT, Ahmedabad, were among the best. However, the IIT directors refused to say anything about OBC quota in the faculty. They said their proposal has been sent to the government.

Now, insurance cover for HIV+ in K'taka

(Source: Times of India, Delhi, 14th August 2008)

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: The number of people living with HIV in India runs into the millions. Yet, insurance companies have largely ignored them, till now.

On Wednesday, a group health insurance plan was launched for 250 HIV-affected people, the first of its kind. The scheme is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under Project Connect, a programme designed to build public-private partnership to combat HIV and tuberculosis in India.

Population Services International (PSI), an NGO, in partnership with Star Health and Allied Insurance Company and the Karnataka Network for Positive People (KNP+) launched the scheme.

The policy, not available to individuals, will be given to a group of about 300. In Karnataka, the policy has been given to 250 applicants from six districts — Bellary, Mangalore, Mandya, Udupi, Kolar and Mysore. K Sujatha Rao, director general, National AIDS Control Organization (Naco), said they were also trying to work on a policy that would explore the possibility of getting applicants to start saving for medical treatment.

There will be 175 link centres in the state, she said. Naco has a budget of Rs 11,000 crore this year, Rs 150 crore of it being spent on information and communication.



CSA division will attending a conference and exhibition on 17th August 2008 organized by IIRWM'2008 (India International Recycle & Waste Management Exhibition and Conference' 2008) 16 - 18th August, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

Mr. Saija Chacko is conducting a hand holding process for Farvahanar Gramin Chetna Samiti, at Ragnopur, Ballia, Uttar Pradesh.