



TEZPUR UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

(Volume 18 - Issue 4)

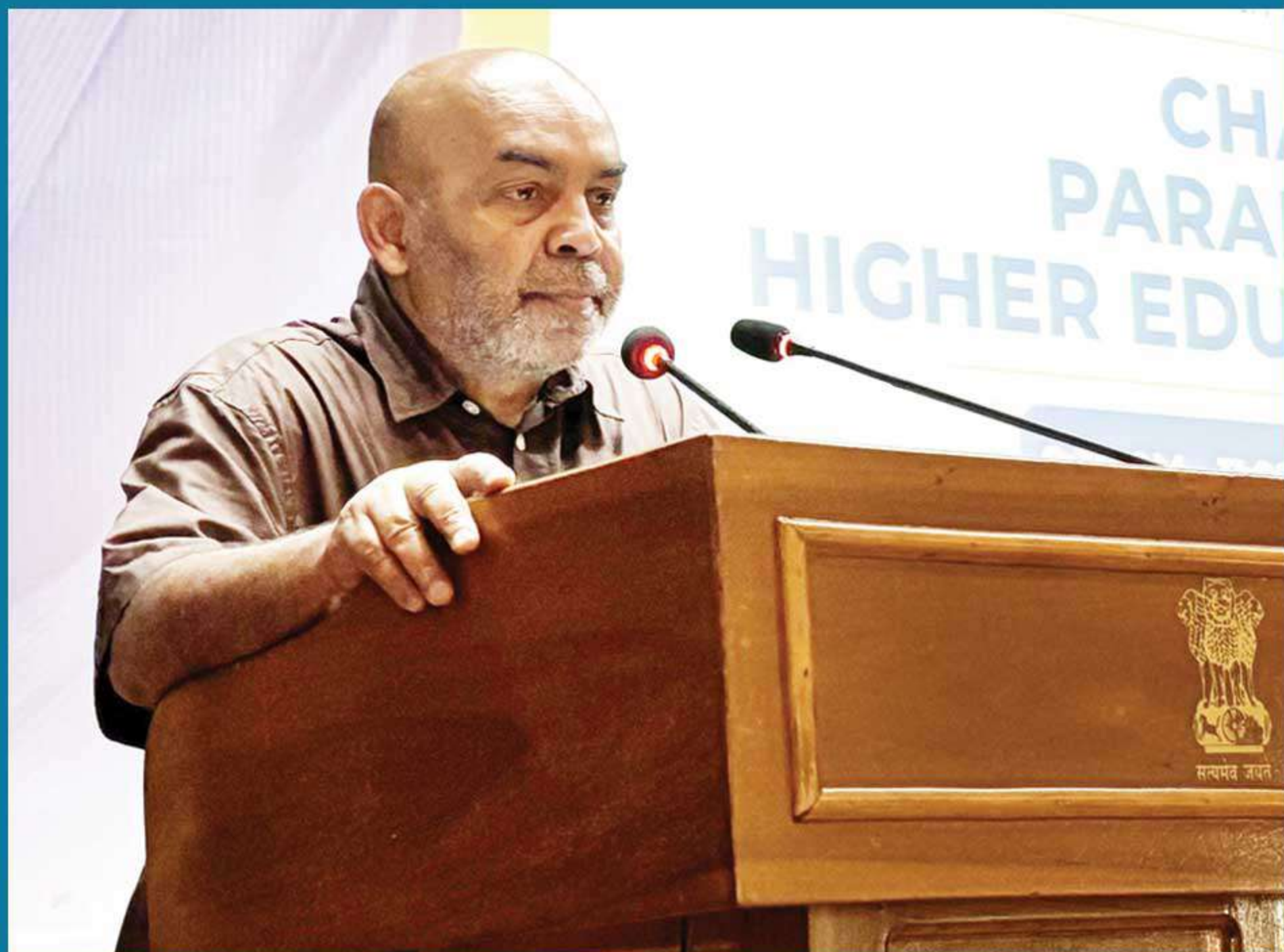
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VC's Corner



It is with immense pleasure that I address you through this edition of the Tezpur University Newsletter, reflecting on the significant strides we have made in June and July 2025.

A landmark development has been the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. This historic agreement is a testament to our commitment to fostering academic collaboration, joint research initiatives, and faculty and student exchange programs. We anticipate that this MoU will open new avenues for scholarly dialogue and deepen the historical and cultural ties between India and Thailand.

The University has conducted the Tezpur University Entrance Examination and is ready to enroll students through other admission channels such as CUET, JEE, GATE, etc. In every new academic year, we strive to bring something new to the table, be it adapting to the changing demands of society or focusing on the physical and mental well-being of our students.

Let me congratulate the Editorial Team for publishing another edition of the Tezpur University Newsletter.

EDITORIAL

We are happy to publish the June-July edition of the Tezpur University Newsletter. This edition highlights Tezpur University's significant achievements in June and July 2025. Key points include a new MoU with Silpakorn University for academic collaboration, a prestigious UCLA MEAP grant for archiving Assamese children's periodicals, the observance of International Day of Yoga, a public lecture on changing paradigms in higher education, a dialogue on plastic waste management, an international webinar on the universality of yoga, the release of new books by faculty and students, and the celebration of Rabha Diwas to honor Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha. We thank you all for your continuous support. Happy reading.

Editorial Team



Tezpur University and Silpakorn University Sign MoU

In a landmark development aimed at strengthening academic cooperation and cross-cultural engagement, Tezpur University and Silpakorn University, Bangkok (Thailand), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 23rd May, 2025 at the President's Office, Silpakorn University.

The MoU was formally signed by Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh, Vice Chancellor of Tezpur University, and Prof. Tanasait Ngawhirunpat, President of Silpakorn University, in a ceremony that underscored the spirit of mutual academic enrichment and friendship between the two institutions.

This historic agreement marks a significant step toward fostering academic collaboration, joint research initiatives, and faculty and student exchange programs. Both universities are also committed to sharing academic resources, organizing collaborative seminars and workshops, and promoting cultural understanding through

interdisciplinary studies.

Silpakorn University, known for its deep roots in Thai-Indian culture and its excellence in the arts, humanities, and sciences, brings a distinguished academic legacy to this partnership. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor Singh said that this MoU is expected to open new avenues for collaborative learning and scholarly dialogue between India and Thailand, deepening the historical and cultural ties that the Tai-Ahom and other Tai ethnic groups in Assam share with Thai heritage.

Representing Tezpur University at the event were Prof. R.R. Hoque, Dean of Academic Affairs, and Dr. Juri Gogoi Konwar, Head of the Department of Cultural Studies. Their presence further reinforced the university's dedication to internationalization and cultural exchange. Counsellor Muthu Ramachandran was present in the MoU ceremony on behalf of the Indian Ambassador to Thailand.



TU faculty Secures Prestigious UCLA MEAP Grant to Archive Assamese Children's Periodicals

Tezpur University's Dr. Pallavi Jha from the Department of English and Dr. Subhadepta Ray from the Department of Sociology, along with Mr. Abhijit Bhattacharya, Documentation Officer, from the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences (CSSS), Kolkata, have been awarded the prestigious Modern Endangered Archive Program (MEAP) project grant by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Library.

The two-year grant, titled 'Archiving Childhood: Assamese Periodicals for Children (1980-2020)', will facilitate the creation of a crucial online digital archive of popular Assamese children's periodicals published between 1980 and 2020. This initiative marks a significant milestone as it is the first time any university or institution in the northeast region of India has secured this highly competitive grant. The project aims to preserve a vital part of cultural and literary heritage by digitizing these periodicals, making them accessible to researchers, educators, and the public including the Assamese diaspora worldwide.

Congratulating the team, Vice Chancellor of the University, Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, said that the funding is instrumental in safeguarding the rich legacy of Assamese children's periodicals. "Creating this digital archive will not only preserve these invaluable historical documents but also open up new avenues for interdisciplinary research into childhood studies, regional literature, and cultural history", Prof Singh added.

The online repository will provide a comprehensive and easily searchable platform, serving as a critical resource for understanding the cultural nuances, educational trends, and social narratives embedded within these publications.

The Modern Endangered Archive Program (MEAP) is a UCLA Library initiative dedicated to preserving and making accessible endangered records of cultural heritage from around the world. The program supports projects that digitize vulnerable collections, ensuring their long-term survival and availability for scholarly use.



International Day of Yoga observed

Tezpur University observed the 11th International Day of Yoga (IDY) with great fervour and active participation from students, faculty, and staff. The event began with a soulful sloka recitation, setting a spiritual tone for the day.

Participants then joined the national livestream of the Hon'ble Prime Minister's address, followed by a comprehensive session on the Common Yoga Protocol practice, during which attendees enthusiastically performed guided yoga exercises.

Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh, Vice Chancellor of the University, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Singh said that yoga is a way of life, and the theme for this year's International Day of Yoga—"Yoga for One Earth, One Health"—is especially meaningful, as a healthy and calm mind unites people across geographical and political boundaries.

Prof. Papori Baruah, Head of the Centre for Yoga and Sports Sciences, while speaking on the occasion informed that the University has been

organising various activities during the two month long Mahotsav such as Yoga Camp for students and children, meditation camp, sound healing workshop, international webinar, community outreach programs etc.

The event continued with performances by school-children and university students, showcasing the cultural vibrancy and youth engagement in wellness practices.

A major highlight of the programme was the release of two important publications by the Vice Chancellor- "Yogmanthan", an e-journal commemorating the spirit of yoga, and a book titled "Converging Insights in Yoga and Wellbeing", published by Tezpur University. The Publications encapsulates both academic and practical perspectives on yoga and mental health. During the event, a contingent of the Sashastra Seema Bal, NCC cadets along with students from nearby colleges and schools and local community were also present.



Discussion on Plastic Waste Management

Department of Environmental Science on 5th June, 2025 organized World Environment Day to raise environmental awareness and promote action for a cleaner, greener future.

The celebration commenced with a plantation drive held within the university premises. Gracing the occasion were Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh, Vice Chancellor of TU, and Shri Ankur Bharali, District Commissioner, Sonitpur, along with university staff, faculty, and students.

Following the plantation drive, a pivotal event titled "Dialogue with Stakeholders on Plastic Waste Management" was convened in the Seminar Hall of the Department of Environmental Science.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Singh emphasized the seriousness of plastic waste management as a critical environmental issue. He called for the development of effective management strategies and systematic approaches to reduce plastic waste.

Shri Ankur Bharali remarked that universities and research institutions play a vital role in exploring viable alternatives to plastics, noting that "mere banning of the use is not a solution." He further advocated for a collaborative approach between the district administration and the university to enhance public awareness on the issue.

Prof. R.R. Hoque, Dean of Academic Affairs, reflected on the global journey of environmental

consciousness since the 1972 Stockholm Conference. He noted that despite significant advancements, “reducing the environmental footprint of plastic and moving towards a cleaner, healthier planet remains a challenge.”

Prof. K. Marimuthu, Head of the Department of Environmental Science, informed the gathering about a departmental initiative titled "Life Without Plastic." Through this program, the department is actively working to raise awareness about the

urgent need to address plastic pollution.

The event was overseen by Dr. S. S. Bhattacharya, faculty member of the Department of Environmental Science.

The dialogue session saw active participation from various stakeholders, including representatives from Kaliabor Nursery, Swachh Bharat Mission (Tezpur), Resolin Technologies, Tezpur Municipal Board, and the Balipara Foundation.

Webinar on Universality of Yoga for Health and Progress



Tezpur University's Centre for Yoga and Sports Sciences successfully organized an international webinar titled "Universality of Yoga for Health and Progress" on 12th June, 2025. The event brought together esteemed speakers and participants from across the globe to deliberate on the profound impact of yoga on holistic well-being.

The inaugural address was delivered by the Chief Guest, Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh, Vice-Chancellor of Tezpur University. In his address, Prof. Singh underscored yoga's deep-rooted presence in various knowledge systems of Bharat, emphasizing its role not merely as a physical exercise but as a

comprehensive lifestyle fostering mental, spiritual, and social well-being.

The keynote address was presented by Prof. Ishwar Bhardwaj of Dev Sanskriti University and former Dean, Faculty of Medical Science & Health, Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar. Prof. Bhardwaj elaborated on yoga's holistic approach to problem-solving, highlighting its ability to address issues at their roots and promote self-awareness to alleviate human suffering.

The event began with a warm welcome note from Prof. Robin Dutta, Chairperson of the Organizing

Committee, who emphasized the relevance of the seminar's theme, which aligns closely with the International Yoga Day 2025 theme: "Yoga for One World, One Health."

Prof. Papori Baruah, Head of the Centre for Yoga and Sports Sciences, informed that a key highlight of the seminar was the presentation of 16 research papers from various institutes across India. These papers explored yoga's applications in physical, mental, and spiritual health.

The webinar featured speakers from both India and abroad, including Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Australia, and the USA. Academics and experts from institutions such as the University of Delhi, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Patanjali University, Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, and Lakshmi Bai National Institute of Physical Education also contributed to the discussions.



Tezpur University Releases Books on Education and Cultural Heritage

Tezpur University on 21st May, 2025 released three significant new books, authored by its esteemed faculty members and students, officially launched by Vice Chancellor Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh.

Two books on education, "Accelerating outcome-based primary education - Role of Policymakers and Community" and "Inclusive Education -

Evaluating Support Systems and Learning Aids for Children with Special Needs," were co-authored by Prof. Subhrangshu Sekhar Sarkar, Director, International Affairs, Prof. Papori Baruah, Chief Proctor, and Abdul Latif Hazarika.

The first book is a vital resource for improving primary education outcomes in India, advocating for policy and community engagement. The second

delves into integrated support systems for children with special needs, highlighting the role of resource teachers, volunteers, and learning aids.

The third book, "Treasures of Time: A Curated Collection of Cultural Artifacts," was authored by Dr. Juri Gogoi Konwar, Head, Department of Cultural Studies, and Dr. Subhra Devi, Assistant Curator, Department of Cultural Studies. This book is a curated catalogue of selected artifacts from the Department of Cultural Studies' museum, documenting Northeast India's cultural heritage. It is the culmination of a summer internship project

by six students: Anwasha Gogoi, Bibek Pratim Bora, Chinmoy Saharia, Sonia A Hazarika, Pinkey Gogoi, and Jitu Deuri.

The release event was attended by university leadership, including Prof. Manabendra Mandal, Dean, Students Welfare; Prof. Suvendra Kumar Ray; Prof. R.R. Hoque, Dean, Academic Affairs; and Prof. Debarshi Prasad Nath. Prof. Singh lauded these publications as a reflection of Tezpur University's commitment to impactful research and academic discourse.



Rabha Diwas observed

Tezpur University on June 20, 2025, observed Rabha Diwas with a cultural event, honoring Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha, a prominent cultural and revolutionary figure from Assam. The event, held in the auditorium named after Rabha, featured a lecture by Prof. Debarshi Prasad Nath. Prof. Nath highlighted Rabha's multifaceted talents as a musician, dancer, painter, poet, dramatist, and political activist, emphasizing his profound commitment to social justice.

Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh, Vice Chancellor of the University, while delivering his address as the Chief Guest, remarked that Rabha was a staunch advocate for social justice, famously declaring that the freedom gained in 1947 was incomplete without true liberation for the poor and marginalized. He urged the university community to uphold Rabha's ideals through cultural expression, social responsibility, and a steadfast dedication to equity and freedom. A host of cultural programs were organized on the occasion to celebrate his spirit.



Changing Paradigm in Higher Education

The lecture was delivered by Prof. K.K. Aggarwal, former Chairman of the National Board of Accreditation, founding Vice Chancellor of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi, and current President of South Asian University on 1st July, 2025 at KBR auditorium, Tezpur University.

Friends, the topic which I have chosen for a brief interaction today is "Changing Paradigms in Higher Education."

Higher education in the world—I will talk first and then come to India—has never seen such a wavy structure in the whole world than it is today, and there are several reasons for that. First and foremost, according to me, in the entire history of civilization, we have never come across a time where knowledge expanded as fast as it is doing today. I was reading a book on medical knowledge. It says in 1950, medical knowledge used to double in every 50 years. And today, it is doubling in less than 50 days.

Now, if that is the rate of change of knowledge,

obviously the education system has a great challenge to itself to keep abreast at that rate. Now, if we do not keep pace with the rate of change of knowledge, then we are left behind. Because it's a relative journey. I remember, a quote from the book Alice in Wonderland, it said that "you will have to run very fast to stay where you are." It's such a dynamic world that you will have to be running very fast.

The second thing which has happened is, when the knowledge was expanding, we started compartmentalizing the knowledge in the form of various subjects, various books. In earlier history, there were not various subjects; it was only knowledge as such. But

then we started compartmentalizing. Maybe when science books became fatter and fatter, we said, "Okay, let's have physics as a separate subject, chemistry as a separate subject, biology as a separate subject," and so on and so forth. And then when we found biology was getting bigger, also dividing separate biology sets. So we separated all these.

Now, with the separation of subjects, we created good physicists, good chemists, good botanists, good geologists. But somewhere, we did not create many good scientists, and that became a very serious problem all over the world. It's not only science; it is the same thing about other areas. This is microeconomics, this is macroeconomics, this is managerial economics, and so on and so forth. In the process, we lost sight of the overall picture. So the subjects' overall picture was blurred by the super-specializations surrounding the subject. And with the result that we lost the capability of attacking a problem in a holistic view. We were very happy in publishing papers. We were very happy in citation indexes. We were very happy in h-indexes, but we were somewhere losing the ground to actually solve real-life problems because we became super-specialists in something. And as somebody put it, the stage came where the best researcher felt that he is best because he knows "everything about nothing." Well, if you know everything about nothing, then what use are you to society? And that is what happened more often than not.

Then when we realized this, we found we had made a mistake. Then we said, "Okay, it will not do." So, let's have biophysics, where we try to combine biosciences and physics. Let's have biochemistry. Let's have physical chemistry. Let's have chemical physics. I mean, I don't know, maybe I may be biased, but I still don't know how you distinguish between chemical physics and physical chemistry. But these are two separate watertight

departments in almost all universities.

Then, when it comes to engineering, which is my subject of study. In good old times, we had very few branches of engineering. Then we failed again because of the expansion of knowledge. From electrical, we made electronics. From electronics, we made electronics and telecommunication, then computer science and information technologies, and robotics and automation. Today, people feel that there could be separate degrees of B.Tech in Artificial Intelligence, B.Tech in Internet of Things, B.Tech in Digital Imaging, and so on and so forth. So again, in the process, somewhere, we missed the essence and worked on super-specializations. I crudely put it many times: it was like not strengthening the structure of the house but trying to put beautiful paintings on the walls of the houses. That is what we did in education. We decorated our paintings. Our house was very well, without bothering about what is inside. Unless you have a strong foundation... I say if you are staying on the fifth story of a beautifully decorated building, but don't bother about the first floors, then one day it has to collapse. So that is what we did to higher education, particularly if I give an example for engineering. If you want a good software engineer, we created wonderful software engineers, but we did not bother whether he is a good computer scientist. If we created a good computer science engineer, we did not bother whether he is a good engineer. When we created a good engineer, we did not bother whether he is a good scientist. When we created a good scientist, we didn't bother whether he is a good human being. Now that structure is dilapidated. Then even if you have the best software engineers, they will be of very little value to society as a whole. And

that is where the whole problems of higher education started in the whole world.

I remember a very senior politician once told me, he said, "When you all know that you can't know the sex of the child before the child is born, that's the law. And because otherwise people used to abort the female child, and so the law had to be made." So a doctor was asked by a politician, "You do abortions of female children. How do you make sure that you are not caught?" He said, "The moment I abort, I give the placenta to the dogs which I have in my clinic itself, who eat that up. So there is no proof, and I can never be caught." Now he may be an excellent doctor, but do we need doctors of that kind? Who does it serve society if you have a bad human being who has turned himself or herself into a very good doctor? So that is what started happening in higher education by compartmentalization of knowledge and earning brownie points on super-specializations. We created very watertight departments, and unfortunately, like in this country, we had the habit of following the West. Unfortunately, losing sight of our own rich cultural civilizations and not only following the West, then we wanted to exceed the West, even in the wrong direction. So we made watertight compartments so rigidly that as a Vice Chancellor for more than 40 years, I find we take more time to solve the problems between this department and that department rather than doing what's necessary within the departments. So that became the problem of higher education.

All of you must have heard of Marie Curie. Marie Curie was one of the greatest scientists this world has produced, or probably the only female scientist in the whole world, but irrespective of that, she was the scientist who got Nobel Prize in Physics as well as Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Now, can you imagine today that one can do groundbreaking research in physics as well as groundbreaking research in

chemistry? It's unthinkable. You talk to any young student. We do selections everyday, Sir. "This is beyond my PhD. Don't talk to me on this." That's the philosophy with which we are going to higher education.

Coming nearer home, Jagdish Chandra Bose. He invented microwave communication, which is groundbreaking research in physical sciences, and he also gave a hypothesis that plants have life—a groundbreaking hypothesis of life science. Can you imagine today we producing a student who is excellently good in physical sciences as well as in life sciences? The question does not arise. They don't even talk to each other all through their career in the university. Teachers of two departments won't talk, students of two departments won't talk. Now, how do you produce a Jagdish Chandra Bose? How do you produce a Marie Curie if you don't talk amongst yourselves? I can give examples upon examples of all great people. Say, those who are from an engineering background, we have Newton, for example, he worked in mechanics, he worked in optics, he worked in gravitation. He was one human being. So the point which I'm trying to say is, we understood super-specialization is life, and knowledge is secondary. That was a very big mistake which was made. And when it came to PhDs, the situation became worse and worse. Today I have started coming across many articles which have again started saying that PhD must be broad-based. Otherwise, we are going into a very deep black hole. If PhDs continue to be focusing only on these things, so instead of trying to be multi-disciplinary, we try to become super and super specialists.

I remember there is a lab in the USA, they say, "We allow young scientists to come and

research." Somebody goes there, he says, "What's your problem?" "Sir, this is a physics problem." He says, "Then go to a physics lab. Don't come to us." Somebody says, "It's a chemistry problem." He says, "Then go to chemistry, don't come to us." Somebody says, "I just want to discover whether this problem can be solved by physics or chemistry." "This is the ideal stuff for us. We work here." So much so, they rather have said now from multidisciplinary we go for anti-disciplinarity. You do not attach yourself to a discipline so strongly that you stop thinking about the knowledge from other areas and solving the problems. That happens all over the world, and probably happened much worse in India. And therefore, we became aware of this situation very late in the day. After 40 years, we brought out the National Education Policy in 2020. Those of you who have really read the document, it's a historical document which, as I say, lists all the problems of higher education. I'm very careful in my words. It lists all the problems of higher education, not all the solutions. Because it's impossible to give all the solutions in one document. And we have now rightly come to the conclusion that education must be multi-disciplinary.

Institutions like Stanford have already started 5 years programs combining Computer Science with English, or Computer Science with Music. Why? Because language processing is essential for AI, and music theory underpins digital audio engineering. These integrations were unthinkable a few decades ago, but they are the future now.

And now, how to achieve that? There are several issues which are coming in the way of achieving this. For example, unless the interest of the individual student is preserved, I don't think education can serve its purpose because education is certainly not a mass phenomenon. You go to a doctor. The doctor asks you some symptoms, gives you some medicines. Your friend also asks

the doctor at the same time. Maybe your friend gives the same symptoms, but the doctor still gives a different prescription. Because he looks at your body structure, he looks at your body weight. He looks at your past habits. And then decides. So just as health is an individual prescription, education is also an individual prescription.

I was reading an interesting story. Somebody asked ChatGPT, "When in doubt, what should I do?" And the answer was, "Believe your instincts." So, "believe your instincts" is the final thing which has to happen in life, despite all technologies.

Friends, according to me, instead of focusing too much on the subjects, now the time has come to focus too much on the attributes which we have to learn. For example, one of the attributes of learning could be communication skills. I find the solution which has been followed in many universities is to have a period for communication skills. Hire a teacher who can teach communication skills. And that's done. Now, if the student is exposed to communication skills for one hour and the remaining six hours he is taught by teachers who are bad in communication, does he still become good at communication or not? We will have to make sure that many of these attributes become embedded in us. Unless teachers become role models, unless teachers become empowered, I do not think we can deliver education in the manner we wish to.

And why I am raising all these points here? Because you are one of the good universities, you are fully autonomous. You can make your own decisions. My request to the honourable Vice Chancellor would be, "Let's take bold decisions." Sometimes, when knowledge

doesn't make your way, ethics can make the way. So, do not lose sight of ethics at any point in your life. That will be very, very costly at times. Friends, particularly young aspiring researchers, do your subject very well. I don't promote that you don't attend to your subject, but at the same time, look to other subjects; try to solve the problems. And what somebody says is that you will have to become a T-shaped personality. When we say "T-shaped personality," what we mean is breadth of several subjects and depth of some subjects. While we still achieve the depth of one subject, we do not acquire today the breadth of several subjects, and once we don't do that, we are losing something.

I was reading about an experiment, a beautiful experiment described, it's called the "white socks experiment." In a university which had a campus as beautiful as yours, with several trees and so on and so forth, they asked the students one day to come with white socks. When they came, they were told to remove their shoes, put on their white socks, and walk through the campus for 2 hours. After that, they gave all the students a microscope each. They said, "Remove your socks. Look at the bottom of the socks and see what trees do we have on the campus. Now, will that student ever forget

which trees we had on the campus?

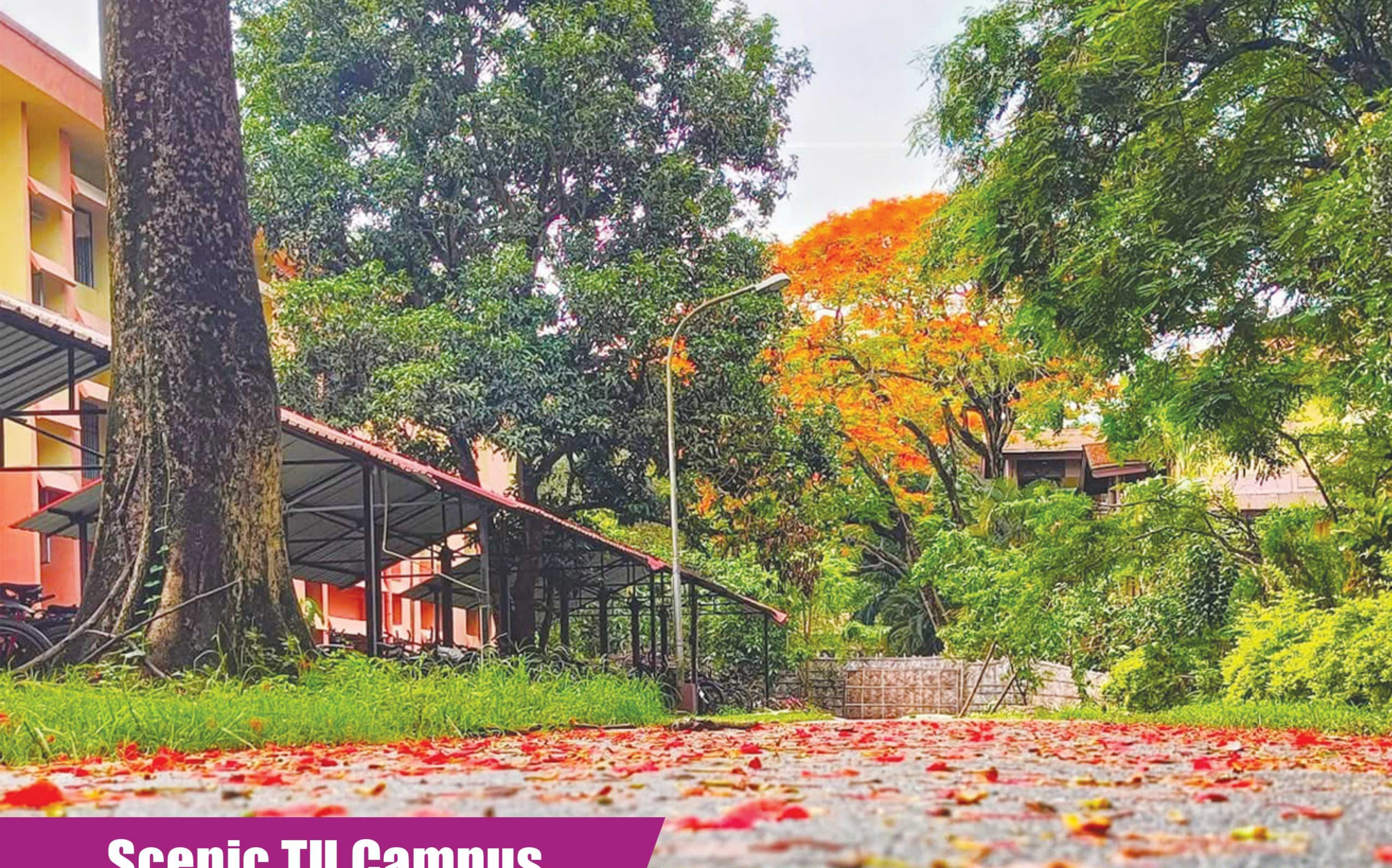
We must also rethink how we evaluate learning. The three-hour theory examination — a relic of the past — is still considered the gold standard. Why is three hours the right amount of time? Why not two? Is this really the best way to test creativity, problem-solving, or application? We need to shift from fixed time, one-size-fits-all models to more flexible and meaningful assessments.

Equally important is the idea that education must produce good human beings, not just skilled workers. A brilliant software engineer who lacks ethics or empathy is a liability to society. A successful scientist who cannot collaborate or communicate is of limited value. Character and values must become an integral part of our education design.

Let us use this moment to rebuild our educational foundations — strong, inclusive, flexible — and create institutions that future generations will be proud of.

Thank you.





Scenic TU Campus





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