

- 2 Sep 2014
- Hindustan Times (Delhi) Rai Atul Krishna rkrishna@hindustantimes.com

After 800 years, Nalanda gets its students back ... led by DU alumna Gopa Sabharwal



Prof Gopa Sabharwal
PhD Sociology 1993 DSE
Vice Chancellor Nalanda University



Dr N K Singh
BA Eco Hons 1960 SS
MA Eco 1962 DSE
among the Founders

Around 800 years after it was razed by foreign invaders, Nalanda University reopened its doors on Monday in an attempt to reclaim its ancient glory as an international knowledge destination.

The new university, set up on a sprawling 443-acre campus built near the ruins of the ancient seat of learning in Bihar, aims to rebuild the intellectual rigour of the old school, initially with a school of Environmental Studies and a School of Historical Studies. The government has sanctioned 2,700 crore to raise the new university, which has begun with seven faculty members and 15 students, and will go on to have seven schools for postgraduate and doctorate students by 2020.

“Our ethos will be the same as the Nalanda University of yore, but in a modern avatar,” **Vice-Chancellor Gopa Sabharwal** said at the opening at the International Convention Centre at Rajgir, a Buddhist pilgrimage centre about 100km from Patna and 12km from the ruins of the earlier Nalanda University.

Nalanda, which existed long before Harvard and Cambridge were set up, was a centre of excellence not just for philosophy and Buddhist studies but also for literature and mathematics. At its peak, the university accommodated over 10,000 students and 2,000 teachers.

It also attracted intellectuals from around the world, including Chinese scholar Hieun Tsang who spent nearly 15 years at the university in the fifth century AD.

A group of scholars led by Nobel laureate, and former DU Professor (Bharat Ratna) **Amartya Sen** supported by alumnus **Dr N K Singh** former Secretary Govt of India and Member Rajya Sabha helped revive Nalanda, which seeks to establish a 21st century university that maintains the heritage of its predecessor.

The Ministry of External Affairs will support six students from Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam at Nalanda, which has been revived as part of a wider Asian renaissance.

Started during the reign of Gupta king Sakraditya in the fifth century AD, Nalanda was razed to the ground by Turkish invaders in 1193 AD.

*DU began 1922 with 750 students 02 Faculties and 25 teachers . See where we are today :
525,000 students , 16 Faculties , 86 Departments , 82 Colleges and over 11,000 teachers !
And we've 3.8 million alumni across 4 ever – evolving generations .*

*Feels really good to know our alumna and longtime academic now steers the destiny of one of
Asia's historic centres of Learning :*

Go To , Gopa !!