

**MINUTES OF THE 225<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTURE HELD ON THURSDAY, 12<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2020 AT 3.00 P.M., ONLINE THROUGH ZOOM APPLICATION.**

**PRESENT:**

1. Ar. Habeeb Khan : Chairman
2. Ar. Sapna : Vice-Chairman
3. Ar. N. K. Negi : Member
4. Ar. Kapil Setia : Member
5. Ar. Ramesh Kumar : Member
6. Ar. Sadiq Ali : Member

**In attendance:**

1. Shri R.K. Oberoi : Registrar-Secretary
2. Shri Deepak Kumar : Administrative Officer

The Chairman welcomed the members of the Committee and thanked them sparing for their valuable time for attending the online meeting.

<b>ITEM NO.01</b>	<b>CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 224<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL.</b>
	<p>The Chairman informed the members that the minutes of 224<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee were circulated to the member on 09.11.2020. No comments were received from the members.</p> <p>The Executive Committee after perusing the Minutes confirmed and approved the same.</p>
<b>ITEM NO.02</b>	<b>ACTION TAKEN REPORT ON THE MINUTES OF THE 224<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.</b>
	<p>The Executive Committee perused the action taken report on the minutes of the 224 meeting of the Executive Committee and noted the same.</p>
<b>ITEM NO.03</b>	<b>PAYMENT OF HONORARIUM/SITTING FEE TO NATA 2020 COORDINATION COMMITTEE.</b>
	<p>The Chairman informed the members that the Council is conducting National Aptitude Test in Architecture (NATA) every year for admission to First Year of 5-year B.Arch. Course every year. In order to ensure smooth conduct of NATA Test, the Executive Committee in its 208<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019, constituted NATA Coordination Committee</p>

	<p>consisting of Ar. Ranee Vedamuthu, Convenor, Ar. Sapna, Member, Ar. Abhay Purohit, Member; and Ar. R. Ramesh Kumar, Member.</p> <p>The NATA 2020 examination has been successfully conducted by the Council and results have been announced.</p> <p>In order to recognize the sincere efforts and contribution made by the Committee Members for ensuring smooth conduct of NATA 2020 examination and to compensate them, the Executive Committee at its 222<sup>nd</sup> Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020, desired to know the details of number of meetings held by the NATA Coordination Committee for deciding the amount of honorarium.</p> <p>The Registrar-Secretary informed that the Committee has met about 20 times from December 2019 to October 2020. The Central Government has approved a sum of Rs.4,000/- per meeting as sitting fees for meetings of the Committees of Council.</p> <p>The Executive Committee after deliberations in the matter decided that the Committee members be paid sitting fees as approved by the Central Government for attending the meetings of NATA coordination Committee.</p>
<p><b>ITEM NO.04</b></p>	<p><b>PAYMENT OF HONORARIUM TO THE MEMBERS OF NATA INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED FOR VERIFYING AND ENQUIRING/INVESTIGATING INTO THE AUDIO/ VIDEOS PROVIDED BY M/s. GINGER WEBS PVT. LTD. FOR UNFAIR MEANS BY CANDIDATES IN NATA 2020 EXAMINATION.</b></p>
	<p>The Chairman informed the members that after conduct of NATA 2020 first examination and on noticing several cases of unfair means by the students in home based test a Sub-Committee was constituted to enquire/ investigate the audio/ videos provided by NATA 2020 Service Provider Ginger Webs Pvt. Ltd. about the unfair means cases of both the tests conducted by the Council and to submit their recommendations about the candidates found to be using unfair means in the examination.</p> <p>Similarly, after conduct of Second Examination, several such committees were constituted to expedite the process and to declare the NATA results as per schedule.</p> <p>The Committee deliberated in detail in the matter and decided that Rs.100/- per candidate be paid as honorarium to members of the Committee for enquiring/investigating the audio/videos of the candidates who were suspected of having used unfair means in the NATA 2020 examination.</p>

<b>ITEM NO.05</b>	<b>PAYMENT OF HONORARIUM TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES CONSTITUTED FOR HEARING THE CANDIDATES FOUND GUILTY OF USE OF UNFAIR MEANS BY INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE(S).</b>
	<p>The Chairman informed the members that after investigation of the audio/videos of suspected candidates the Council withheld their results and constituted several Hearing Committees to hear the candidates found to be using unfair means during NATA 2020 Examination so that a final decision can be taken about the results of such candidates. The Hearing Committees held the hearings online on two days and submitted its recommendations to the Council.</p> <p>The Executive Committee deliberated in the matter and decided that the members of the Committees be paid Honorarium of Rs.10,000/- per day for conducting online hearing of candidates found guilty of using unfair means in NATA 2020 examination.</p>
<b>ITEM NO.06</b>	<b>PAYMENT OF HONORARIUM TO THE MEMBERS OF THE APEX COMMITTEE.</b>
	<p>The Chairman informed the members that he constituted an Apex Committee for exclusively hearing the candidates who were part of Parul whatsapp group and found to be cheating during NATA 2020 Examination and also to consider the recommendations of all hearing Committees and making final decision in respect of the students who found guilty of use of unfair means in the NATA 2020 Examination. The Committee held its hearings on two days and compiled the final decision to be taken in respect of all the candidates found guilty of using unfair means.</p> <p>The Executive Committee after deliberations in the matter decided that the Apex Committee members be paid honorarium @ Rs.10,000/- per day.</p>
<b>ITEM NO.07</b>	<b>TO CONSIDER GRANTING EX-GRATIA TO THE REGULAR EMPLOYEES OF THE COUNCIL, WHO ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR PAYMENT OF NON-PRODUCTIVITY LINKED BONUS (ADHOC BONUS) FOR FINANCIAL YEAR: 2019-20.</b>
	<p>The Registrar-Secretary informed the members that the Non-Productivity Linked Bonus (adhoc bonus) for the Financial Year: 2019-20 has been paid to 15 employees of the Council belonging to Group B (Non Gazetted) &amp; C as on 31.03.2020 in terms of the order number No. No.7/24/2007/E III (A) of Government of India, Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure, (E III-A Branch), North Block, New Delhi dated 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2020 subject to a maximum of Rs.6908/- per year (Circular/ order enclosed).</p>

	<p>However, the following 8 employees of the Council are not eligible for bonus due to pay ceiling and falling under Group A &amp; B posts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shri Raj Kumar Oberoi, Registrar</li> <li>2. Shri Deepak Kumar, Administrative Officer</li> <li>3. Shri Sandeep Sharma, Assistant Administrative Officer</li> <li>4. Shri Deepak Kumar Singh, Assistant Administrative Officer</li> <li>5. Shri Murari Lal Bhatt, Superintendent</li> <li>6. Shri Manoj Sharma, Superintendent</li> <li>7. Shri Lalit Prakash Kala, Superintendent</li> <li>8. Shri Shankar Lal Sharma, Jr. Accounts Officer</li> </ol> <p>The above 8 employees who are not eligible for bonus have discharged their assigned duties and carried out the responsibilities in the functioning of the Council dutifully and efficiently in the overall functioning of the Council in as much as the employees who were granted Adhoc Bonus.</p> <p>The Committee was also informed that Council has approved budgetary provisions for payment of the same under the Budget Head “<b>BONUS/ EX-GRATIA</b>” for the current financial year i.e. 2020-2021. The Council has been paying ex-gratia to all regular employees who are not eligible for Adhoc Bonus as a convention/ practice from quite a long time.</p> <p>The Executive Committee after deliberations in the matter and decided that the Ex-Gratia amount of Rs.6,908/- for the financial year 2019-2020 be paid to all the above 8 officers of the Council as per past practice/convention.</p>
<p><b>ITEM NO.08</b></p>	<p><b>TO CONSIDER THE LETTER DATED 04.11.2020 RECEIVED FROM PARUL UNIVERSITY, VADODARA, IN RESPONSE TO THE SHOW CAUSE NOTICE DATED 02.11.2020 ISSUED BY THE COUNCIL.</b></p>
	<p>The Chairman informed the members that the Executive Committee in its last meeting after considering the report of the Enquiry Committee constituted to enquire into the role of Parul University, Vadodara, in organizing mass cheating in NATA 2020 examination conducted by the Council, decided that a show cause notice be issued to the institution as to why recommendations of the Enquiry Committee be not given effect to.</p> <p>The Parul University vide its letter dated 04.11.2020 has submitted its reply/ response in the matter.</p> <p>The Executive Committee perused the response submitted by the institution. The Committee also noted that the representatives of the institution have also been called for hearing by the Executive Committee before taking a final decision in the matter.</p>

Accordingly, the following representatives of the Parul University appeared before the Executive Committee online:

1. Mr. Devanshu Patel, President, Parul University
2. Dr. M.N. Patel, Provost, Parul University,
3. Prof. Salil Bhatt, Principal, Faculty of Architecture, Parul University

The Chairman submitted that whatever they wanted to say in the matter they have already submitted the same in writing before the Council. He further, stated that their University is a multi-disciplinary University and offering education in several branches and their University is very popular in the State of Gujarat. He also stated that the University was entrusted to take JEE and NEET examination also in the past. It was also a center for NATA examination conducted by Council of Architecture. He stated that many of their faculty members were also involved as NATA observer by Council.

He stated that when the incident happened his father expired and he could not pay much attention in the university. He further stated that barring Ar. Harshit Sadh no other faculty member was involved in cheating in NATA examination.

He further stated that the university has taken action against the faculty members which were named by the Council of Architecture for their involvement in cheating in NATA examination. He informed that the services of Ar. Harshit Sadh and As. Namrata Singh have been terminated and Dean has also been replaced by the University. He stated that the group was created only for creating awareness and promotion of Parul University and not for organizing cheating in NATA examination.

He stated that about 28000 students are currently studying in the university and there has never been any such type of incident.

The Provost of the University stated that whatever happened had happened in bad time and the person who was involved had admitted his mistake on affidavit and for the error of one particular person the entire university should not be penalized.

The Executive Committee asked the representatives of the institution to submit the copy of their internal enquiry report in the matter to the Council to enable it to come to appropriate decision. The representatives of the institution agreed to provide their internal report to the Council.

Thereafter, the representatives of the University were requested to leave the meeting.

The Executive Committee, after going through the reply of the university vis-a-vis the report of the Inquiry Committee constituted by the Council and upon hearing the representatives of the University at its online meeting held on November 12, 2020, came to the following conclusion:

1. The Parul University with Architecture Faculty Members created a Whatsapp Group with the phone number registered in the name of Parul University to help the interested students by coaching and guiding them about NATA 2020 examination.
2. Mass Cheating was conducted by students with the help of the faculty member(s) of the Parul University in both the tests by posting live answers. The faculty member(s) of the University were indulged in facilitating and organizing cheating and use of unfair means in NATA 2020 for candidates in the official group of the University on NATA Test held on August 12, 2020 and September 12, 2020.
3. The University failed to conduct any inquiry and take any action against the guilty Faculty member(s), in time, since the Whatsapp group was created to help the university in getting students who pass the NATA test. The university took cognizance only when the Council reported the matter to it. It is incomprehensible to assume that the university was unaware of the illegal activities being undertaken on its official WhatsApp group.
4. The replies and answers given by the University or its representatives were evasive and full facts were not disclosed before the Committee by them or even in the reply dated 04.11.2020.
5. The ultimate beneficiary in the matter is University and the faculty involved seem to have no personal gain out of the same. Therefore, it seems that the faculty is being made scape goat by the university to account for its own failures. Further, it is incorrect to infer that the admissions are beyond the control of the university as they are being managed by ACPC, Gujarat since the students are being oriented to opt for the university during admission process/counseling by providing them assistance through illegal means.
6. The students who benefitted from the mass cheating during NATA 2020 Examination have also admitted and corroborated the fact during the course of their hearings before the NATA Inquire Committees appointed by the Council, that the University and its faculty members were involved in the entire episode and they helped the students during examination.

7. The action taken by the University against the faculty member(s) is not sufficient to stop the University and its faculty from undertaking such illegal and unethical activities. It may be mentioned that Parul University, declared as a Private University under Gujarat Private Universities Act, 2009, is itself an independent authority to administer and manage the affairs of the University. The University is also responsible to establish, administer and manage its constituent colleges and centres and is required to supervise and regulate the discipline of students, faculty and staff of the University. However, the University chose not to apprehend, detect and act against such a massive scam being orchestrated by its faculty right under its nose even though it happened on August 29 & repeated on September 12, 2020.

8. Enquiry Report of the university also makes it clear that the faculty and staff was involved in cheating and misconduct directly or indirectly which is an offence.

The Executive Committee further observed that the mass cheating organized on official WhatsApp group of the Parul University has caused serious damage to the sanctity of the NATA 2020, irreversible loss of goodwill & reputation of the Council of Architecture. The Executive Committee opined that strict action must be taken against the University, on similar lines to those students who were found to be indulging in the unfair means and whose NATA 2020 results were cancelled, to act as a deterrent and to set a precedence for the future. The action is much needed to restore the credibility of NATA Test which is the only national level aptitude test in Architecture for passing Aptitude Test in Architecture for admission to B.Arch. Course to seek admissions in Government as well as Private architectural institutions.

The Executive Committee after detailed deliberation in the matter passed the following Resolution:

**Resolution No.:266**

**Resolved that:**

1. The intake of the institution in B.Arch. degree course being imparted be reduced to 20 for the academic session 2020-2021, to act as deterrent for Parul University for having indulged in unethical practices through its faculty members to allure and misguide students and helping them in using unfair means to qualify the NATA 2020 on the pretext of admission counselling of students in the Institution and for its failure to exercise proper regulatory and disciplinary control over the faculty and its staff for misuse of its resources and data of students available with the Institution/ University for organising cheating in NATA 2020;

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The approval of the institution for the academic session 2021-2022 shall be decided by the Council based on satisfactory compliance of the decision of the Council as well as its adherence to the Minimum Standards of Architectural Education prescribed by the Council.</li> <li>3. The University, if it so desires, may file a complaint of professional misconduct against the concerned faculty members to the Council for professional misconduct under the provisions of the Architects Act, 1972 and Regulations framed thereunder.</li> <li>4. The Council reserves right to take further action in case any new fact pertinent to the matter is brought to the notice of the Council or found by it, other than what has been found in the enquiry report submitted by the university or in the investigation conducted by the Council.</li> <li>5. The University/ Institution be warned not to indulge in such activities in future.</li> <li>6. The faculty of the Parul University shall not be considered for assigning any role in conduct of NATA for next five years i.e. as question paper setter, as observer or as centre incharge; and</li> <li>7. Further, the Council shall not allow to conduct NATA at the campus of the Parul University in future.</li> </ol> <p>The decision of the Committee be communicated to the Institution for strict compliance.</p>
<b>ITEM NO.9</b>	<b>TO CONSIDER THE REPLY RECEIVED FROM HR-11-GANGA INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE &amp; TOWN PLANNING, JHAJJAR.</b>
	<p>The Chairman invited the attention of the members towards the proceedings of the EC in its last meeting wherein the EC considered the comparative chart and information placed before it about the HR11- Ganga Institute of Architecture &amp; Town Planning, Jhajjar, Haryana and observed that Bank Statement of the Institution regarding payment of salary to faculty members have not been provided by the Institution.</p> <p>It was also informed that the institution on 02.11.2020, submitted monthly salary reports of its faculty members from the period from June, 2020 to October, 2020 with details of salary transfer. However, copies of bank transfer letters, as asked by the Council, were not supplied.</p> <p>The Executive Committee, after perusing the information/documents submitted by the institution regarding the available faculty and other infrastructure facilities, noted serious deficiencies in the conduct of 5-year B.Arch. degree course and 2-year M.Arch. degree course at the institution in terms of Minimum Standards of Architectural Education as prescribed by the Council and are as follows:</p>



- The institution is lacking in the required number of faculty.
- The Inspection Committee reported faculty deficiency of 40% at the time of inspection. Many of the faculty members shown by the institution were not known to the present faculty members.
- The list of faculty submitted by the institution to the Council for the last 3 academic sessions in its reply is not satisfactory as a lot of inconsistency is observed. The names of many faculty members are different than the application forms submitted by the institution at COA portal during 2017-18, 2018-19 & 2019-20.
- Some of the faculty members are observed to be fluctuating between B.Arch. and M.Arch. courses being imparted at the institution. They are shown in B.Arch. course in one session and M.Arch. course in other and vice-versa.
- The salary being paid to the faculty members is not as per Norms and are far too less. It is further observed that some component of the salary is being paid through cash against the Norms.
- The records related to salary, bank statements supplied by the institution were not found to be properly maintained by the institution and in absence of complete information, raising doubts about the availability of fulltime faculty members for B.Arch. & M.Arch. courses at the institution.
- The attendance registers of students in B.Arch. & M.Arch. courses, as provided by the institution for last 3 academic sessions, were not maintained properly by the institution and were also not counter signed by the concerned subject-faculty. Further, the verification of the same suggests alteration/change at a later date. The original registers did not seem to be old & dated at the time of their verification.

The Executive Committee after detailed deliberation in the matter passed the following Resolution:

**Resolution No.:267**

**Resolved that:**

1. The approval of the institution for the B.Arch. and M.Arch. degree courses be withdrawn for the academic session 2021-2022 and the institution be directed to apply for extension of approval for the said courses at the online portal of the Council for the academic session 2021-2022 after compliance of the norms of the Council.
2. The Institution be directed to remove all the deficiencies as pointed out by the Council and to impart architectural education strictly as per the norms of the Council including payment of salary and qualification of faculty and submit its point-wise compliance to the Council within a period of one month from the receipt of this letter, failing which the strict penal action shall be initiated by the Council against the institution

	including withdrawal of approval, closure of institution and/or transfer of existing students to other institutions.
<b>ITEM NO.10</b>	<b>TO CONSIDER FURTHER COURSE OF ACTION REGARDING MISUSE OF OFFICE OF PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTURE BY AR. VIJAY GARG, MEMBER COA.</b>
	<p>The Executive Committee perused the draft letter as attached at Appendix-E of the agenda in terms of the decision of Committee taken in last meeting.</p> <p>The Committee after having detailed deliberations in the matter and noted that the complaint sent by Ar. Ramaraju against Ar. Vijay Garg needs to be investigated properly as President, Council of Architecture, is a public servant and allegations made in the complaint points out towards conflict of interest and misconduct on his part.</p> <p>The Executive Committee, therefore, decided to constitute an Enquiry Committee comprising of Prof. Kavita D Rao, Convenor and Ar. R. Ramesh Kumar to investigate into misuse of office of President of Council of Architecture by Ar. Vijay Garg the then Acting President by granting approval HR-11 Ganga Institute of Architectural and Town Planning, Jhajjar, Haryana, during the academic session 2019-2020 for a period of 3 years for B.Arch and M.Arch course without considering the previous inspection reports and also taking such a decision while he was perusing M.Arch (landscape Architecture) from the same institution.</p> <p>The Executive Committee decided that the relevant documents be made available to the Committee members so that they can investigate the matter and submit their report the earliest.</p>
<b>ITEM NO.11</b>	<b>TO CONSIDER THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE INCURRED AGAINST THE BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR: 2020-2021 DURING THE PERIOD FROM 01.04.2020 TO 31.10.2020.</b>
	<p>The Executive Committee perused the provisional Statement of Income and Expenditure of the Council during the period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020, as against the approved budget estimates for the financial year 2020-2021.</p> <p>The Executive Committee after detailed deliberations noted that there are certain heads under which proposed expenditure could not be carried out by the Council.</p>

	<p>The Committee was informed that in view of the pandemic certain activities could be not commenced and an appropriate step are being taken to undertake all such activities during the financial year 2020-2021.</p> <p>The Executive Committee desired that a summary of all such heads where no expenditure could be made be prepared and placed in the next meeting for its consideration.</p>
<b>ITEM NO.12</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER ITEM WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR.</b></p> <p>No other item was discussed.</p>
<p>The meeting ended 6:20 pm with a vote of thanks to the chair.</p>	

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