

DU teachers' semester stir 'out in the open'

By **Ritika Chopra**
in New Delhi

TEACHERS' resistance to the introduction of semester system in Delhi University (DU) is about to make a comeback, but in a different avatar.

Since the Delhi High Court order prohibiting strikes, dissent has only been voiced during the few general body meetings called by different departments of the university.

But now the teachers have hit upon a unique method to register their protest and generate a debate at the same time.

In the coming days, as the social science, arts and commerce departments go about their business of bringing out their new syllabi — mathematics, psychology, Hindi, philosophy and political science departments are almost ready with their draft syllabus — in the semester mode, teachers will hold public lectures to apprise students on the "struggle" against the semester system and, consequently, mobilise a larger support base for their agitation.

"We are tired of being projected as teachers who are not interested in doing our job. We have some valid arguments against the introduction of the semester system. We will now try to reach out to the students through interactive classes or public lectures in the open to generate a larger debate on this matter," Nandini Dutta, a professor of economics at Miranda House, said.

This is not the first time that lectures will be held in the open



There could be more such scenes in DU in the coming days.

to drum up support for an issue at the university.

"In 1987, teachers had held classes on the lawns as a mark of protest against their pay revision. Eventually, we were able to mobilise a large number of students supporting our cause," Nandita Narain, mathematics professor at St. Stephen's College, said.

DU introduced the semester system across 13 undergraduate science courses last year and intends to do the same for the remaining arts and science programmes by the new academic year, beginning in July.

Last year, attempts

to introduce the semester system had snowballed into a full-fledged battle between the teachers and the DU administration as the former felt that the then vice-chancellor Deepak Pental was doing so in an "autocratic" manner.

Teachers continue to remain unhappy under the tenure of the new vice-chancellor Dinesh Singh as they feel their points

CASE FILES

June 5, 2009: DU decides to implement semester system at the UG level

July 2009 to April 2010: Teachers clash with DU as the former feel semester system is being introduced in an "autocratic" manner

May 28, 2010: DU admission process for UG programmes begins

June 3, 2010: DUTA appeals to teachers to "disassociate" from admission process

Oct 29, 2010: Teachers withdraw strike after HC asks DUTA not to hold students' careers to ransom

of argument against the system, are still not being taken into account.

"I am aware of the concerns of the teachers and I have left it to the wisdom of the departments to take them into account while preparing the syllabus. I can assure all the teachers that due process laid down in our act and statutes will be followed," Singh said.