

(c) A Task Force was constituted under the Chairmanship of Prof. M. M. Sharma *vide* this Ministry's Order dated 22nd March, 2005 with regard to assess scientific research in Universities. The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Task Force were to (i) assess the status of basic scientific research and training in universities, (ii) suggest solutions and strategies to retrieve and enhance the excellence of the universities and (iii) assess resources required to implement the recommended solutions along with their modalities. To re-assess the present status of basic scientific research and training in universities, the Task Force has been reconstituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. Anil D. Sahasrabudhe, the then Director and Professor, College of Engineering, Pune on 25th November, 2014.

#### **National Academic Depository**

1824. DR. K. V. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to establish National Academic Depository (NAD), if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the object of the depository and by what time the depository would be operationalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MAHENDRA NATH PANDEY): (a) Yes, Sir. The Union Cabinet in its meeting held on 27th October, 2016 has accorded its approval for establishment and operationalisation of the National Academic Depository (NAD) on the pattern of securities depository. NAD will comprise of two inter-operable digital depositories *viz.*, NSDL Database Management Limited (NDML) and CDSL Ventures Limited (CVL).

(b) NAD shall be a 24x7 online store house of academic awards digitally lodged by various academic institutions/boards/eligibility assessment bodies. These awards shall cover degrees, diplomas, certificates, mark-sheets including awards issued for skill development. Maintenance of academic awards in a digital depository will enable online access, retrieval and verification of these awards. The NAD would be operationalised shortly.

#### **Higher Education Financing Agency for State funded institutions**

1825. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether an agency such as Higher Education Financing Agency established for development of high quality infrastructure in Centrally funded premier institutions, would be extended to State funded premier institutions;