

have enough money to train students and teachers on a mass scale as most of the interest on our corpus and income from music classes goes into teachers' salaries. We don't raise much through concerts either because organisers of western classical concerts — unlike Indian classical concerts — have to pay higher entertainment tax to the state government," says Jeejhebhoy.

Despite official discrimination, Jeejhebhoy believes there's a huge reservoir of untapped demand for western classical music in India. "We have students from all communities learning with us. Every 25 years a prodigy comes along and we are ever ready and waiting to nurture and train this prodigy. Once the demand for western classical music is unleashed, our school will be the first to supply great musicians," she says.

Currently the foundation holds two-three concerts per year in which MMF students entertain Mumbai's western classical audiences. "One of our objectives is to work with government to build a National Orchestra which can perform on behalf of the country. India's children are very talented and interested in western classical music. With our commitment and perseverance, we will make them into great musicians," she says optimistically.

**Bharati Thakore** (Mumbai)

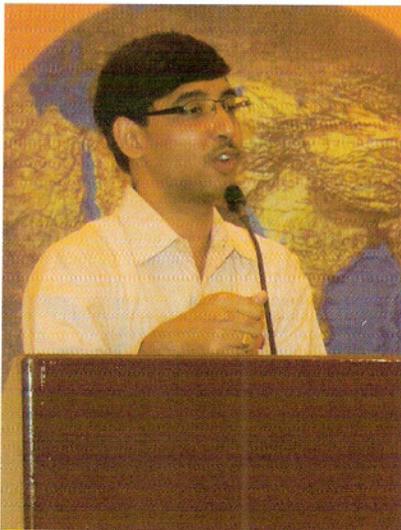
### NABET missionary

**E**DU...CARE — A DIVISION OF THE Aurangabad-based HR Consultants Pvt. Ltd — has been appointed by the Delhi-based NABET (National Accreditation Board for Education & Training) to train and prepare schools countrywide for accreditation. Fashioned after the Bangalore-based NAAC (National Assessment & Accreditation Council) which inspects, rates and certifies colleges and universities, NABET was promoted by the Quality Council of India (estb.1996) in January 2008, and is the country's first initiative to rate and certify primary, secondary and higher secondary schools.

Comments Vilas Kulkarni, an alumnus of Shivaji University, member of the Maharashtra State School Accreditation & Assessment Committee and executive director of Edu...Care: "Our school education system urgently needs

upgradation for colleges and universities to output multifaceted industry-ready graduates. To this end we are organising awareness programmes for schools and parents associations in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Our primary objective is to introduce schools to the concept of accreditation and explain its benefits, so that they can prepare themselves for accreditation."

According to Kulkarni, the accreditation process takes a minimum of six-nine months at the end of which NABET rates and grades schools which volunteer for accreditation. "Accreditation is not certification. It is about competency, not compliance. Various aspects of a school are assessed —



**Kulkarni: competency not compliance**

teaching, governance, infrastructure, co-curricular activities — for complete social and ethical development of students. The focus is on curriculum development rather than the syllabus," he explains.

One of the first schools to be certified by NABET is the Kendriya Vidyalaya at IIT-Powai, Mumbai. A few other schools are likely to be accredited this month.

Kulkarni believes that all stakeholders in the school education system — parents, teachers and institutions — "need to be on the same page" for systemic changes to take place. "In other countries parents demand accreditation. Currently that is not the case in India. Parents must demand that schools upgrade and improve constantly. We tolerate anything, for example, school

buses without attendants. Such attitudes impact safety. The accreditation process will examine these aspects. And once a school is accredited there will be surveillance to ensure compliance," he promises.

Meanwhile Edu... Care is all set to prepare 50 schools for NABET accreditation in 2010. "Our first priority is to persuade school managements to volunteer for accreditation by NABET. Once they accept the idea, we will aid and abet them to complete the process of accreditation successfully," says Kulkarni.

**Dilip Thakore** (Bangalore)

### Eco-evangelist extraordinaire

**T**HE UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE Change Conference in Copenhagen last December, attended by over 15,000 heads of state, environment ministers and other officials, failed to reach any accord or provide a roadmap for reducing emissions and combating climate change. But that hasn't deterred one spirited missionary from continuing to crusade against the rising tide of carbon emissions. Environmentalist M.B. Nirmal, founder of the Chennai-based ExNoRa ('Excellent, Novel, Radical') International (EI) who attended the conference, presents a simple solution to save the planet, which he believes is the moral responsibility of every individual.

"The biggest advantage India has is its population and our human resources must be mobilised to solve the problems we face today. Every individual should practice the code of self sacrifice which includes planting trees, creating awareness campaigns and communal harmony, fighting pollution and corruption, reducing oil consumption, promoting vegetarianism and leading a simple life. Governments will follow in the people's footsteps," says Nirmal, who posts details of his voluntary sacrifice movement on the website [www.voluntarysacrifice.org](http://www.voluntarysacrifice.org).

Founded in 1989, Exnora International is a non-government organisation focused upon people's participation in ecology and clean environment at the grassroots level, and empowering communities to attain this objective. The idea took root when Nirmal's family lost