



## Shake-up in Delhi Govt set-up

By A Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI, February 14: The city government has made a minor shuffle of its senior officers.

The transport commissioner, Mr Ashok Pradhan, has been transferred to the Union ministry of commerce. He has been replaced, for now, by Mr Narendra Prasad, who had been on deputation outside the government. The development commissioner, Mr Rakesh Mehta, has been transferred to the Andaman Islands, and has handed over charge. The financial commissioner, Mr Madan Jha is looking after the job, in addition to his regular one.

Mr Haroon Arfi, officer-on-special duty with the New Delhi Municipal Committee, is to look after the post of director, social welfare, vacant since the retirement from government service two weeks ago of Mr S. K. Batra. Mr A. S. Awasthy, director, public grievances, in the chief minister's office, is to also officiate as secretary, NDMC, in place of Mrs Renu Sharma, who is to go to Daman.

## ITDC stir

The ITDC Trade Union Federation has threatened to launch an agitation from Feb-



# Changes in NGMA rules hit artists

By RATNOTTAMA SENGUPTA

NEW DELHI, February 14: DELHI artists have been caught unawares by changes in rules governing the purchase of works for the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA). Most of them have been waiting since December for the annual advertisement in newspapers inviting slides to be scrutinised by the purchasing committee. Meanwhile, the committee, which will hold its second meeting here tomorrow, has already bought the work of artists after directly visiting some of the galleries and studios here.

A third change in the rules, which stipulates a freeze on artists whose works have been purchased in the last five years, is also being viewed with suspicion. Senior artist Satish Gujral heads the committee which includes the artist, the Akbar Padamsee, the art critics, Ms Geeta Kapur and Mr Santo Dutta, and joint secretary (culture), Komal Anand. Being unwell, Mr Anis Farooqui, the curator of NGMA, was not present at the last meeting.

"The ad was not issued in Delhi because there was hardly any time to do so," explained Mr Satish Gujral. The panel was formed late in December and the appointment letters reached the members only in January, although the last committee expired in July. This was "perhaps because of changes in (the secretary of) the department of culture." But in spite of

this delay, the committee is required to complete its selection by March 1 so that the purchase formalities can be completed before the month-end. As in the other government departments, the Rs 30 lakh budget has to be used up before March 31.

The ad "which is issued in obscure, DAVP-approved newspapers," according to a member of the former purchasing committee, "often does not reach many artists who learn by word of mouth." The committee had therefore suggested that notices about the purchases be put up in the various art institutions such as the Lalit Kala Akademi, the College of Art and Triveni Kala Sangam. Since this also had not been done, many artists and galleries did not get to know that the purchasing committee had already met in January and finalised the purchase of some works.

These works were selected by

the committee after visiting galleries such as Dhoomimal, Vadehra and LTG, besides the Garhi studios and those of some individual artists. The criterion for choosing these have been questioned by many in art circles. "Why go to a one-show-old gallery like Eicher, or to a slumbering one like CCA?" asked a gallery owner. "And why leave out the Village Gallery, which is holding a rare show of one of our contemporary masters?"

The third rule regarding the artists purchased in the last five years has already been broken, according to a reliable source, with the selection of at least one work by Anupam Sud. The selection of a sculpture by another artist in this category has run into rough weather, but the tie over its selection is likely to be resolved at the second meeting with the verdict of one member who had not seen it earlier.

"We knew that this rule will have to be relaxed if we see

genuine merit," Mr Gujral clarified. "And still we set the rule because we noticed that in the past, while many artists had been represented almost every year, some names have not been included at all." Besides, the present committee also wishes to "fill up gaps in the evolution of artists of stature" such as Gaitonde, F.N.Souza and Ghade. If the gaps cannot be filled up with works available with the artists or galleries, collectors might be requested to help out with donations, one learns.

The purchasing committee will also visit the Triennale to consider the Indian works in it. But richer by its Delhi experience, the committee will now issue an ad in the Calcutta dailies on Friday, inviting artists to submit slides of their works. The committee will meet in Calcutta over the weekend, and will also visit Madras in March. Bombay may have to wait for the new financial year and, consequently, the new budget.

