

Unconventional convention centre

Azad Shrivastav | ADC

By Pallavi Smart

Mumbai University's Kalina Campus is to get a one-of-its-kind world class 'Convention Centre', equipped with the latest facilities, all thanks to an ex-student of the University who has donated a huge sum of Rs.30 crore to his alma mater.

On Wednesday, Asit Koticha, Chairman ASK Group of Investment Services, an alumnus of Poddar College, an affiliate of the University of Mumbai, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the varsity for building the Convention Centre.

According to Dr. Rajpal Hande, Director, Board of College and University Development, when Koticha showed keenness to donate some amount to the varsity, Vice Chancellor Dr. Rajan Welukar suggested that a convention centre could be built.

"In a city like Mumbai, we do not have a good convention centre where seminars, talks and other mass enrolment events can be conducted," said Welukar.

When contacted, Koticha said, "It is not about paying cash. We are going to take up the entire responsibility of building the Convention Centre. Once it is built, it will be handed over to the varsity as property after which we will have no



Asit Koticha handing over MOU to Special Officer, Kurhade as Rajan Welukar looks on.

role to play. Earlier, we were to commence with the project on June 5, but it is not possible as construction work is not undertaken during the monsoon. The construction is likely to commence by the end of September. We are anticipating that the building will be ready for use in three years or so."

Hande said, "It will be a green building with all the latest facilities. It will have not only seminar halls but also five star accommodation facilities for delegates. It would be

the country's largest convention centre. Out of the 15 globally renowned architects invited to design the structure, eight will be short-listed, out of which one would be selected."

When asked why he chose the varsity over his college, Koticha clarified, "The University is a much larger entity than any college. When this centre is built on varsity land, many more students will benefit from it." "It is all set to become the pride of the city," said Welukar.