

Hyderabad professor John Varghese to replace Valson Thampu as St Stephen's principal

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Varghese will take over as St Stephen's principal on March 1

NEW DELHI: A professor of Hyderabad's English and Foreign Languages University John Varghese will be the new principal of Delhi's St Stephen's college after current principal Valson Thampu's tenure ends on February 29. Varghese will take over on March 1.

The Hyderabad professor was chosen from a group of three applicants who had applied for the post; the interview was held on Wednesday.

"On behalf of the supreme council of St. Stephen's, I am delighted to announce that Prof. John Varghese of The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad has been selected for appointment as the 13th Principal to take charge w. e. f. 1 March 2016. The candidates eligible for the post were interviewed in detail today and the selection of

Prof. Varghese was unanimous. Prof. Varghese is an outstanding academic, experienced administrator and visionary leader. He was formerly a faculty member of the English Department of St. Stephen's College. I wish Prof. John Varghese all blessings and good wishes in assuming this significant and challenging responsibility," outgoing principal Thampu said on his Facebook page.

Varghese is not a St Stephen's College alumnus but a product of Loyola College, Chennai. Thampu says he left St Stephen's in the 1990s. "He has a brilliant academic record, is sensible, sober and unlike me, he's a man of peace," says Thampu. The EFLU

website says Varghese is a professor in the Communication department of the School of Interdisciplinary Studies.

The other two contenders for the post, he says, were Karen Gabriel, a present member of the English department and Susan Varghese of St John's College, Agra.

Thampu believes the college had few applicants for the post because "the eligibility conditions are so unrealistic". "The 400 API (Academic Performance Index) that covers research, publications, teaching experience, administrative experience, participation in national and international seminars, is fine for university professors, but is unrealistic and unhelpful for principals, 90% of whose work is administrative," says Thampu.

However, Thampu also argues that "some people refused to apply" because of the controversies that have swirled around the principal's office during his tenure. "I know two outstanding candidates who fulfill all requirements but didn't apply."