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## Assurance on upgrade - Besu, 150, celebrates

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



Chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and higher education minister Sudarshan Roy Choudhury share a word at the Besu function on Friday. Picture by Sanat Kumar Sinha

The state is in constant touch with the Centre over the proposed upgrade of the Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu)'s status to that of an Institute of National Importance (INI), chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee said on Friday.

"I have written to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in this regard," Bhattacharjee said at a function to mark Besu's 150 years of existence.

"Our higher education minister (Sudarshan Roy Choudhury), too, is trying to convince the human resources development ministry to accord the INI status to Besu, which is among the best engineering institutions in the country," the chief minister added.

Roy Choudhury, also present at the programme, said the state government has completed all formalities for the INI status. "We are waiting for the formal announcement from the Centre."

Bhattacharjee said he has requested the Prime Minister to be present at the function to be organised by the university on December 24.

Bhattacharjee has also pleaded with Singh to sanction around Rs 40 crore to the Shibpur campus to enable it to implement its projects.

Both the chief minister and the education minister, however, were silent on the proposal of bestowing the IIT status on Besu. (An INI tag for Besu would not automatically lift it to the level of IIT, though all IITs are INIs.)

The duo did not mention the admission procedure and the model of governance the institution would follow if it were declared an IIT.

The human resources development ministry in September had sought a "clear stand" from the state government on these issues.

The chief minister welcomed the string of projects the university has undertaken for its all-round development. He appreciated the plan to set up an automobile engineering centre. "Bengal is progressing fast in the automobile sector. We will need a large number of automobile engineers shortly," he added.

