

BE urges Centre, state to bridge IIT gap

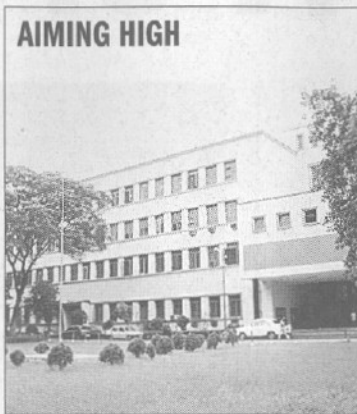
By Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey/TNN

Kolkata: Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu) — formerly BE College — is taking every possible step to ensure that the proposal to confer it an IIT status does not go off the rails.

At a meeting on Tuesday, the varsity academic council decided to keep both the Union human resources development ministry — which is willing to confer an IIT status on Besu — and the state government in good humour and pleaded inability to frame new rules on its own.

A letter from M. Anandkrishnan, chairman of the expert committee constituted by the Union ministry to evaluate Besu on December 2, has asked the university to suggest the kind of governance it would like to have once it becomes an IIT.

Besu though does not wish to take the risk and has left it to the two governments to thrash it out. "How



can we suggest our preference? IITs are governed by the IIT Act whereas Besu is being governed by the Besu Act that was passed in September 2004," said Besu vice-chancellor N R Banerjea.

"The academic council has resolved that the Centre and the state

should draw up a new governance plan for us jointly, which would bridge the existing gaps between IITs and us," he added.

The resolution will be approved by the varsity's board of management on Thursday and its copies will be sent to chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and Union HRD minister Arjun Singh.

The university has already dwelt on the gaps existing between the governance of IITs and that of Besu and these will also be forwarded to the two governments along with the resolution of Tuesday's meeting.

While Besu is ready to allow IITs more autonomy in matters relating to finance, it would itself like to enjoy greater autonomy as far as academic and administrative matters are concerned.

"The IITs get a block grant from the Centre that they have the freedom to spend. But Besu gets grants under various heads that cannot be

interchanged. Again, IITs recruit teachers on their own but Besu has to go by vacancy," Banerjea said, trying to explain the gaps.

IIT is governed by a board of governors, a senate and a finance committee. Besu has its court, executive council, faculty council, board of studies, finance committee and planning and monitoring boards.

"Both the Centre and the state have representatives in each of these bodies. But the Centre's presence is higher for an IIT and the state's more in Besu. We wish that the two governments sit together and re-adjust the ratio," said a member of the academic council.

Objecting to Besu's system of admitting students through the West Bengal Joint Entrance Examination, the Union HRD ministry suggested that it should opt for IIT JEE or AIEE, but Besu felt even that decision should be taken by the Centre and state together.