

# Funds now, IIT status on hold for Besu & JU

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**Kolkata:** This will put to rest, for the time being at least, the tug of war between the Centre and the state over two of Bengal's premier universities — Bengal Engineering and Science University (BESU) and Jadavpur University (JU). They will remain state-sponsored universities, though they will be getting extra funds from the centre for upgrading of infrastructure and facility.

The much coveted status of IITs or INI (institute of national importance), however, will remain elusive for a while longer.

For the past six months, ever since BESU and JU were selected by the MHRD for upgradation to IIT status, a debate had been raging as to whether the universities would be "taken over" by the Centre. Experts visited the two universities in December to see if they were fit for the upgradation. The report was submitted in early February on the basis of which a meeting was convened in Delhi on Thursday among representatives of the state, the universities and the MHRD.

It has been decided that the Centre will not "take over" the seven selected universities in any way and they would continue to be

run by the state. "This means that the legal status of the institutions will not change and they will continue to remain state sponsored. MHRD officials also told us that no decision has been taken on the IIT/INI tag. This will be decided in the 11th Five-Year Plan," BESU vice-chancellor N R Banerjea, who was in Delhi for the meeting, said.

However, the entire exercise has not been futile. The MHRD has categorically said that it would still send extra funds to the selected institutions to enable them to improve infrastructure and facilities. The two Bengal var-

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sities are

likely to get funds to the tune of Rs 50 crore. Every institution has been rated by the expert team on a preset scale of parameters and the funding will be on the basis of the score. "To start with, we have been told to identify one area of excellence and draw up an upgradation plan for which funds would be given. We have to send this plan within 10 days," Banerjea added.

The MHRD officials told the selected institutions that they would have to admit students on the basis of a national level entrance exam and that teachers will have to be recruited from across the country.