

Besu, JU in sight of elite status

Varsities May Be Tagged Institutes Of National Importance; Talks Start On Sept 1

By Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey/TNN

Kolkata: Two of the state's premier institutes, Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu) and Jadavpur University (JU) have a good chance of making it to the list of Institute(s) of National Importance in the 11th Five Year Plan.

The Union ministry of human resource development (MHRD) has invited JU and Besu on September 1 to start discussions on the issue. It has also asked the state government to send its representative to the meeting, as several issues need clearance from the state. This is the first time MHRD has communicated with the state on INI issue.

Last year, the MHRD had selected seven universities from across the country. JU and Besu were among those shortlisted. The two institutes

had been asked to submit upgradation plans and indicate the investment required for this.

An expert committee was sent to the two campuses for assessment, after which one-time payments of Rs 10 crore and Rs 7 crore were sent to Besu and JU respectively.

The letters that reached the two vice-chancellors on Tuesday list the issues to be discussed at the meeting and request the varsities to submit plans. The upgradation scheme in the 11th Plan, changes in governance structure and admission procedure, teacher-student ratio, increased intake and financial projections for upgradation are some

of the topics to be discussed.

The letter says the present governance structure and admission procedure in the selected institutes will have to be changed to bring them on

a par with the IIT pattern. This was the moot point over which the MHRD and the two state varsities had differed when the INI status issue was first broached. Besu and JU had asked the MHRD to sort out the matter with the state.

The MHRD wants JU and Besu to admit students through IITJEE — the entrance exam of the IITs — and not the state-conducted WBJEE. It also wants the teacher-student ratio to be 1:10, like the IITs.

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Besu VC N R Banerjee

“This time, not only the two vice-chancellors, but also the state higher education secretary Ashoke Mohan Chakraborty, will attend the meeting,” Besu vice-chancellor N R Banerjee said.

Even before the 11th plan comes into effect next year, the MHRD will sanction an amount to each selected institute which it will have to spend by the end of financial year 2006-07.

“We plan to ask for another Rs 10 crore for an eight-storey building and a central computing facility,” Banerjee said. Besu had asked for Rs 950 crore for upgradation.

Partha Pratim Biswas, member of the committee that will represent JU in the meeting said: “We will depose along the lines of the agenda sent to us. We had asked for Rs 400 crores for upgradation, we will reiterate it again.”