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Campus upgrade forces board shift - Plot being scouted on the eastern fringes for new JEE office

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



Clock tower at Bengal Engineering and Science University (formerly BE College). A Telegraph picture

With Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu) set to be recognised as an Institute of National Importance, the state government is preparing to shift the joint entrance examination (JEE) board office from the Shibpur campus to the city.

Ever since it was formed 44 years ago, the board, which conducts the test for admission to engineering and medical colleges, has been operating out of the Shibpur campus. Two old students' hostel buildings serve as the office.

Once the board gets its separate office, a new post will be created to head it. Now, the vice-chancellor of Besu functions as chairman of the board.

"We have submitted a proposal to the state higher education department seeking land to set up an office of the board," said the board member-secretary Asim Kumar Bose.

Government officials stated the search for a suitable plot on the eastern fringes of Calcutta, preferably off EM Bypass or in Rajarhat, has started.

Separating the board from the Besu is necessary in the wake of the Centre's offer to upgrade the 150-year-old institution, asserted education department officials.

"Academic, research and other activities of Besu will increase manifold after its upgrade. The board, too, might find it difficult to function if it remains on the campus, as its volume of work is increasing every year, with the enrolment for JEE going up steadily," explained



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Bose.

The total number of examinees appearing for the JEE crossed 100,000 this year after the state government decided to allow students from across the country to write the entrance test. The number of examinees had not exceeded 63,000 before that.

Moreover, when Besu is upgraded to an Institute of National Importance, the new rules of governance might not permit its head to function as chairman of the board.

“The board’s activities were earlier restricted to conducting an entrance test for admission of engineering students. Gradually, entrance tests for medical and nursing colleges and polytechnics were introduced. We hope to conduct some more exams in future. The space in our existing office is not enough for the expansion,” pointed out an official.

The state government had set up the board in 1962 exclusively for holding tests to admit students into engineering courses offered by Bengal Engineering College, as Besu was known then.

The college was set up in 1856. It was affiliated to Calcutta University in 1857.

In 1992, the institution was upgraded to the status of a deemed university. The status of a full-fledged university followed in 2004.



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