



# The Telegraph

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## JU status lift shelved

OUR BUREAU

Nov. 6: The Centre has no immediate plan to upgrade Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu) — formerly BE College — and Jadavpur University (JU) to the level of institutes of national importance or the IITs.

Human resource development minister Arjun Singh has conveyed to cabinet colleague Priya Ranjan Das Munshi in a letter dated November 1 that the institutions will continue with their existing status and remain state-aided universities.

Singh's ministry had constituted an expert committee last year to suggest a plan to upgrade Besu, JU and five other institutes outside the state to the level of the IITs.

The committee had said that Besu could be made an institute of national importance through the establishment of Indian Institute of Engineering, Science and Technology through an act of Parliament.

Das Munshi, the information and broadcasting minister, had written to Singh last month requesting him to consider a proposal to complete the process of upgrading Besu at the earliest and award the new status when the university celebrates 150 years in November.

"I have had the matter examined...." Singh said. "However, the institute will continue to maintain the present identity and the Central government is not presently contemplating taking over the seven selected institutions through an act of Parliament."

"The Government of India would like the seven institutes to strive for a national identity which includes admissions at the national level, governance structure similar to that of IITs, curriculum reform and stress on postgraduate education and research," he added.

He also promised "generous grants" for the upgrade.

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However, Bengal higher education department officials felt the Centre was unable to upgrade Besu and JU as the state government is yet to finalise its decision on the contentious admission issue.

At present, both institutions admit students through the state-conducted joint entrance examinations (JEE).

The state government has also not clarified whether it would allow the two institutes to follow a governance structure similar to that of the IITs. "The matter is still being examined," higher education minister Sudarshan Roy Chowdhury said. "We will soon submit our final report to the Centre," he added.

On September 1, the human resource ministry held a meeting with state government representatives and the seven institutes were shortlisted for the upgrade.

The representatives were given a September-end deadline for their final opinion regarding the entrance test system they would like to follow from next year.



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