

Varsity seeks CM help for IIT tag

By Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey/TNN

Kolkata: Bengal Engineering Science University has appealed for chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's personal intervention to help it acquire an IIT tag. A letter written to the chief minister requesting for his help has been signed by all faculty members of the university.

The letter was drafted after an emergency academic council meeting called on Thursday. The meeting was attended by all teaching and non-teaching members. And, for the first time ever, both the leftist and the rightist teachers' unions were united on the stand that Besu should not miss out on the opportunity to become an IIT.

Interestingly, Jadavpur University is dragging its feet over the IIT status for which it is being considered by the Union ministry of human resources development.

Members of the Left Front government have been debating on the wisdom of letting two of the state's



best tech universities become IITs. The move would take away the control of the two universities from the

hands of the state as all IITs are directly ruled by the Union HRD ministry, said senior CPM leaders.

The instance of the Regional Engineering College, Durgapur, being upgraded to the status of National Institute of Technology (NIT) in 2003 and its subsequent shift from the purview of the state has been quoted several times in this regard.

This debate has left Besu jittery as it has prepared at length to receive the inspection team that will visit the university on December 2. This team is expected to make the final decision regarding the upgradation of status.

To ensure that its case does not get scuttled, the university convened an emergency academic council meeting on Thursday.

The resolution drawn up at the end of the meeting was, "The longstanding (150 years) contribution of the institution in the furtherance of engineering education in the state and its future potential has been appreciated by the Centre which has considered it for upgradation to an

IIT. This dream should be made into a reality. We plead for the assistance of the state authorities." This, and a covering request note, has been sent to the chief minister, requesting his personal attention in the matter. Copies have been sent to state higher education minister Satyasadhan Chakraborty and Union human resources development minister Arjun Singh.

"The faculty council has unanimously resolved that Besu should become IIT and a copy of the resolution has been sent to the chief minister in the hope that he will look into the whole thing. The upgradation of Besu to IIT would be a rare honour for us and for the past five months we have been fervently preparing for this," Besu vice-chancellor NR Banerjee said.

Secretary of the ruling teachers' union, Besuta, Manash Hira said, "If we lose this opportunity, we will have to hang our heads in shame. The state should back our dream to become an IIT, especially since this is Besu's 150 years."