

BESU still hopeful of national status

HT Correspondent

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ALTHOUGH UNION minister Arjun Singh has sent Bengal Engineering and Science University (BESU) a regret letter, the institution is not quite ready to give up on its hope of becoming an Institution of National Importance (INI).

The regret letter addressed to Governor and BESU chancellor Gopal Krishna Gandhi reached Raj Bhavan late on Wednesday. It categorically stated that the Centre was not upgrading the university to an Indian Institute of Engineering, Science and Technology (IIST) for now because of its poor governance, indiscipline and incidents of ragging.

The letter pointed out that the BESU administration is in jeopardy and unless things improve, the Centre would not be considering a takeover of the university from the state government for the upgrade.

University officials on Friday spoke to chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's office in this regard and would soon forward papers related to the upgrade. In the past one year, Bhattacharjee had written two letters to the Centre urging for BESU upgrade.

Apart from this, the university has also decided to communicate with the Governor, giving him the university's point of view regarding the ministry of human resource and development's (MHRD) allegation of poor governance and indiscipline.

Vice-chancellor N.R. Banerjea, who returned to Kolkata from Delhi on Friday evening, said he was not aware of any letter from the Centre. Refusing to comment on whether he has received the news of the letter lying on his desk since Thursday or whether he has spoken to the Governor on the issue, Banerjea said: "The communication between a chancellor and a vice-chancellor should not reach the public domain."

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allegation of poor governance and indiscipline.

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University teachers, however, have decided to call a meeting and also to write to the Governor, chief minister and MHRD. "We want to state that while we agree with the issue of indiscipline and poor governance, these have never affected the academic performance of the institution. In fact, we were chosen on the basis of our academic excellence. And we have the potential to become a world-class institution and if the Centre takes over BESU and makes it an INI, it can cleanse the governing system as well," said a BESU faculty member.

In 2007, BESU was short listed along with six other technology universities for upgrading to INI.

Time for a new V-C

With Banerjea's term ending on February 28, BESU is on the verge of getting a new VC. Sources said Swapan Bhattacharya, director of NIT Durgapur, might succeed him. The faculty feel a new head would also mean the new promise of cleansing the governance.