

# The Statesman

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[Bengal]

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## Why ill-governed Besu missed out on INI status

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA, Feb. 24: Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu) will not be upgraded to Institute of National Importance (INI) status "for the time being".

The reason ~ newspaper reports highlighting student indiscipline and a The Statesman editorial that spoke about poor governance plaguing the university. In a letter to Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi (also the Chancellor of the university), Union human resource development minister Mr Arjun Singh pointed out that while the university was hoping for a status upgrade, it lacked a proper governance structure. A copy of the The Statesman editorial (scanned copy above, left) was enclosed with the letter.

The letter further stated that the Centre would bestow the status only after "distinctive improvement" in the university's governance. The editorial ~ "A failed University, Besu doesn't deserve to be ranked" was published in the 8 November edition of The Statesman. It may be recalled that the Anandkrishnan Committee had proposed INI status for five institutes, including Besu.

The chief minister of the state had also requested the Centre for the upgrade. But, after more than four years of consideration, the HRD ministry finally sent a letter denying the upgrade. A few months back, Besu had received another letter from the HRD ministry that wanted the university to submit why it should be upgraded while reports of indisciplined students running amok in the university were being reported in newspapers regularly. In a meeting to discuss the upgrade held in the national Capital last month, Mr Arjun Singh too put the same question to the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof NR Banerjea and registrar Mr Biman Bandopadhyay.

Meanwhile, teachers of Besu feel that university authorities should have insisted on being upgraded to an IIT. Teachers felt that Prof. Banerjea should have discussed the proposal with state higher education department officials before denying it. The registrar, Mr Biman Bandopadhyay, however, said that issue of upgradation to an IIT was only discussed in a meeting, but Centre never placed the proposal.

### Student unrest

Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi had to intervene yet again to resolve an incident of student agitation in Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu).

Students of part-time undergraduate programme in civil engineering gheraoed the Vice Chancellor, Prof. NR Banerjea till late in the evening yesterday demanding recognition of their course. It was only after speaking with the Governor that the students agreed to withdraw their protest. The university authorities suspended the part-time classes today as a result of students' misbehaviour.

The part-time undergraduate programme in civil engineering is a five-year integrated course for diploma engineers and is held in the evening. Although the programme was introduced in 2005, it is not recognised by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) yet.

### New Besu Governor

KOLKATA, Feb. 24: Prof. Ajoy Kumar Ray, professor of IIT-Kharagpur and director of

School of Medical Science and Technology of IIT-Kharagpur, will be appointed as the new vice chancellor of Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu).

The Governor and chancellor, Gopalkrishna Gandhi forwarded the name of the new V-C to the higher education minister, Prof. Sudarshan Ray Chaudhuri this evening. The higher education department will send the letter to Besu tomorrow. When contacted, Prof. Ray said that his primary responsibility would be to take Besu to the first position among all the universities. He also added that faculty members of IIT-Kharagpur would provide all necessary assistance to Besu. Prof. Ray's name occupied the first position in the panel of three names which was sent by the search committee. n SNS

Discussion on this Bengal item

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