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Buddha bats for Besu

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee on Monday wrote to human resource development minister Arjun Singh requesting him to upgrade Bengal Engineering and Science University (Besu) to an Institute of National Importance (INI).

A fortnight ago, governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi, the chancellor of the university, had received a letter from Singh stating that the state-aided university would not be upgraded to an INI "for the time being".

According to a source in Besu, the university was denied an upgrade because of recent incidents of indiscipline and student violence on the campus.

Singh, in his letter, had pointed out that the institution needs to improve its governance for the upgrade, the source said.

"Newspaper reports highlighting students' unrest in Besu do not reflect the real state of affairs on the campus. The chief minister has requested the human resource development minister to reconsider the upgrade proposal," said a senior official in the chief minister's secretariat.

Besu registrar Biman Bandyopadhyay said he was aware of the chief minister's letter to Singh. "But we are yet to know the content of the letter," he said.

In November 2008, Besu had received another letter from the Union ministry seeking a report justifying why the institution should be upgraded when violence was breaking out on the campus regularly. "We had sent our reply to the ministry," said the registrar.

In January, senior Besu officials, including vice-chancellor N.R. Banerjea and Bandyopadhyay, visited Delhi to meet Singh and officials in his ministry to discuss the upgrade.

Vice-chancellor

Ajay Ray, a teacher of IIT Kharagpur, will take over as the vice-chancellor of Besu on March 1. The state government issued his appointment letter on Wednesday.

