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Nov 9, 2005

NRIs-F

UPA plans to gift allies home IITs

Wednesday November 9 2005 00:00 IST

NEW DELHI: The UPA government's plan to help large political allies by setting up not one but two new IITs in their states has been opposed by the Planning Commission.

As against promoting wider access by spreading the new IITs throughout the country, the Ministry of Human Resource Development proposed West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh as beneficiaries of the new IITs.

The S K Joshi Committee recommended that the Bengal Engineering College and Jadhavpur University (West Bengal), Osmania University and Visakhapatnam University (Andhra Pradesh), Benares Hindu University and Aligarh Muslim University (Uttar Pradesh) and Cochin University of Science & Technology (Kerala) be converted to IITs.

The rationale given by the committee was that these institutes have the infrastructure and prestige to upgrade them to the level of IITs, as announced by then Prime Minister on August 15, 2003.

But on October 21, the Planning Commission turned down the venues, saying it went against the National Common Minimum Programme of providing quality, access and equity in technical education.

It said that the IITs should be spread as far and wide and all seven should be in seven different states where neither an IIT nor an IIM existed. "I suggested that institutes of national importance should

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- Yes
- No
- Can't Say

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be dispersed as widely as possible for balanced regional development," said Bhalchandra Mungekar, Member (Education), Planning Commission.

West Bengal already has one IIT in Kharagpur and was recently given an Indian Institute of Science Education & Research by the Centre. Uttar Pradesh has an IIT in Kanpur.

The government plans to set up new IITs by upgrading existing institutions instead of going for a new one as expenditure on a greenfield IIT would be around Rs 1,000-1,500 crore.

It asked the identified universities to submit proposals. The institutes have submitted their Vision Documents, which is being examined by the Expert Committee headed by S K Joshi.

The government also plans to introduce new departments, centres and new courses, including life sciences, with consequential increase in enrollment.

In addition, it is also proposed to set up schools of medical and biosciences at IIT Kharagpur and Kanpur.

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