IIT awaits nod for MD course

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Kharagpur: IIT Kharagpur plans to introduce a postgraduate MD (Doctor of Medicine) programme next year.

A National Medical Commission (NMC) team visited the institute before Durga Puja to inspect its infrastructure. The institute expects to receive permission soon.

If approved, IIT Kharagpur will become the first IIT to offer a postgraduate medical programme, said director Suman Chakraborty.

The institute applied to the NMC earlier this year, seeking approval for a 20-seat programme, Chakraborty said.

The visiting team inspected Dr B.C. Roy Medical College on the IIT campus.

The team also visited Syama Prasad Mookerjee Institute of Medical Science and Research, a hospital developed by the institute at Balarampur, on the campus outskirts, where MD students will receive hands-on training.

"To start a medical programme, an institute must be equipped with a medical college supported by a hospital. We have both. If the council permits us, IIT is looking forward to starting the programme from the next academic year. We are ready and are awaiting the outcome of the visit," Chakraborty said.

The IIT has also launched a faculty of integrated health science and technology and appointed a dean of medical science to oversee the new course. The dean was present during the NMC team's visit.

An IIT official said the faculty was conceived to address the growing convergence of medicine and technology in modern healthcare and its employment potential. "The team from the NMC has also been updated about the launch of the faculty, which will play a crucial role in the launch of the postgraduate programme," the official said.

Candidates will be selected through NEET. The institute has appointed 20 doctors to teach students.

The IIT has sought approval for six specialities, including general medicine, radiology, pathology, physiology and community medicine.

On May 17, 2007, then President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam laid the foundation stone of the Dr B.C. Roy Multi-Speciality Medical Research Centre, envisaging an MBBS college and a superspeciality hospital.

However, IIT Kharagpur is now entering medical education through a PG programme, while its MBBS plan remains on hold, apparently because of infrastructure constraints.

At the institute's annual convocation on July 4, Bengal health minister Sharadwat Mukherjee urged the authorities to launch an MBBS programme and offered the state government's support.

An official said the institute's primary focus remained engineering. "It will take us time to think of launching MBBS," the official said.

Last September, the IIT announced that the first surgery had been successfully performed at the Syama Prasad Mookerjee institute.