

Finally, Karnataka to get an IIT

BUDGET GIFT: State's 17-Yr-Long Wait Ends. Experts Hope Netas Won't Fight Over Its Location Now

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Union finance minister Arun Jaitley's announcement in his Budget address that Karnataka will get an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) finally ends a 17-year-long wait for the state.

The state's own successive governments are to be blamed for the delay in setting up the premier engineering institute. It was way back in 1998 that a committee headed by former Isro chairman and space scientist U R Rao submitted its report recommending for an IIT to be set up in Hubli-Dharwad. But petty politics ensured that the proposal remained on paper for nearly two decades now.

Subsequently, former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda recommended that an IIT be set up in his Lok Sabha constituency of Hassan while former law minister M Veerappa Moily wanted it in his constituency in Chikballapur, 60 km from Bengaluru.

The argument put forth was to have the IIT outside Bengaluru for two reasons — one, the city already has an



IIM and the other was to allow districts to flourish with good educational institutions. But experts say an institute like IIT must be closer to industries to enable its students integrate their learning with the industry. "It is great for politicians to say that they got an IIT for a particular district. But IITs are not and should not be politically motivated. They must have students' interest in

mind while setting up institutions of excellence. Different locations suggested by different political leaders ensured that the state never got the premier institute," pointed out an educationist. In 2009, the then HRD minister Kapil Sibal ruled out an IIT for Karnataka and even went on to say that the state was setting it up for political purposes.

With the IIT finally com-

TIMES VIEW

Now that Union finance minister Arun Jaitley has deemed it fit to make a budgetary announcement of an Indian Institute of Technology in Karnataka, chief minister Siddaramaiah should seize the bull by the horns and expedite the process of identifying land for it. In fact, he should make that special effort to find place in or around Bengaluru for it. It seems quite an aberration that the country's IT capital and, in more recent times, the Startup Capital doesn't have an IIT. The city's long-pending demand for this institution has been met and it's up to the state government to ensure we don't lose this opportunity.

ing, R K Misra, urban expert and IITian, too believes there should be no politics over its location. "Some of the top IITs in this country are closer to the city. This is because it is important for students to be connected to companies. Also, placements and industry interaction with students are all very crucial. See IIT-Bombay or IIT-Delhi. They are in the city. It is best for the Karnataka government to set up the proposed IIT near Bengaluru, as it's tough to get so much land inside the city now. To set it up in remote districts will not serve the purpose at all."

Says former IIT-Kanpur professor and director of IIT-Bengaluru S Sadagopan: "The announcement per se is not new. We hope the state government to ensure those dreams come true and don't get mired in politicking."

EDUCATION INC Govt budgets for more central institutes; TN, Assam, K'taka and J&K to benefit

AIIMS, IITs: Country Roads, Here We Come

Our Bureau

Budget 2015-16 reinforced the Narendra Modi government's intention of setting up one major central institute in each state, by announcing five new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in J&K, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Assam; an IIT in Karnataka and IIMs in J&K and Andhra Pradesh.

Besides, Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad will be upgraded to a full-fledged IIT. It is, however, not clear whether the IIM in Andhra Pradesh as outlined by Arun Jaitley in his speech is IIM Vizag, for which the foundation stone was laid in January.

The other proposals outlined include a Post Graduate Institute of Horticulture Research and Education in Amritsar; three new National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research in

Who Gets What



Post Graduate Institute of Horticulture Research and Education in Amritsar

3 new National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education: Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh



Institutes of Science and Education Research: Nagaland and Odisha

Apprenticeship Training Institute for Women: Haryana and Uttarakhand

Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh; Institutes of Science and Education Research in Nagaland and Odisha, and Apprenticeship Training Institute for Women in Haryana and Uttarakhand.

To ensure that higher education is accessible to even the financially-

For the Financially Challenged



IT-based Student Financial Aid Authority to be set up to administer and monitor scholarship as well as educational loan schemes

80,000
Secondary schools to be upgraded

75,000
Junior or middle schools to be added to senior secondary level

challenged, the FM also proposed a fully IT-based Student Financial Aid Authority to administer and monitor scholarship as well as educational loan schemes through the Pradhan Mantri Vidya Lakshmi Karyakram. At grass-roots level, there is need to upgrade over 80,000 secondary schools and add or up-

grade 75,000 junior or middle schools to the senior secondary level, Jaitley said. More institutes are welcome, but the question is how they will be backed up, asked Narayanan Ramaswamy, partner and head, education & skill development, KPMG India. "I expected the budget to be bolder in terms of allowing the PPP model to set up IITs, IIMs," he said.

IIM Calcutta's dean (academic) Anindya Sen said while more institutes are welcome as they allow students a wider choice, the ministry could be more proactive in helping with quick decision-making, coordination with state governments and the like. Others also stressed on this.

"It is not sustainable. One of the big issues is the faculty crunch. The older IITs themselves are having a tough time filling up faculty slots. For newer IITs, it is going to be tougher," said Suneet Tuli, dean-research and development, IIT Delhi. He added: "Land and infrastructure is another major issue."