

Proposed Jio institute gets eminence status with IITs and IISc

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 9

THE GOVERNMENT Monday awarded Institution of Eminence (IoE) status to three public and three private institutes — IIT-Delhi, IIT-Bombay, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), BITS-Pilani, Manipal Academy of High Education, and Reliance Foundation's proposed Jio Institute in Navi Mumbai.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) approved six names against the promised 20 slots. The government's formal

notification is expected soon.

The Union Cabinet had approved UGC's 'Institutions of Eminence Deemed to be Universities Regulations 2017', on August 3, 2017. The regulations are aimed at creating an enabling architecture for 10 public and 10 private institutions to emerge as world-class institutions, since the country has little representation in the international ranking of educational institutions.

Only higher education institutions currently placed in the top 500 of global rankings or top 50 of the National Institutional

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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Ranking Framework or NIRF are eligible to apply for the eminence tag. The private Institutions of Eminence can also come up as greenfield ventures provided the sponsoring organisation submits a convincing perspective plan for 15 years.

The IoEs are proposed to have greater autonomy compared to other higher education institutions. For instance, they will be free to decide their fee for domestic and foreign students and have a flexible course duration and structure.

Their academic collaborations with foreign institutions will be exempt from approvals of government or UGC except institutions based in MEA and MHA's list of negative countries. Once identified, the target for the IoEs would be to break into the top 500 bracket in one internationally reputed ranking framework in 10 years and come up in the top 100 over time.

The 10 government institutions, in addition to the autonomy, will also get Rs

1,000 crore each from the HRD Ministry to achieve world-class status. The government will offer no financial assistance to the private institutions.

The Empowered Expert Committee (EEC), which was entrusted to find 20 institutions out of 114 applicants, could only identify 11, of which six have been awarded the eminence tag, for now. The EEC is headed by former Chief Election Commissioner N Gopalaswami.

The Indian Express has learnt that IIT-Kharagpur and IIT-Madras were among 11 names suggested by EEC, but the two institutes were not awarded the status.

"Out of the 11 names suggested by the EEC, only three were private. So a decision was taken to announce equal number of institutes from public and private sector, which, consequently, limited the announcement of public institutions to three for now," government sources said.

The UGC has requested the expert group to suggest nine more institutions it deems fit for the eminence tag, so that announcements for the remaining IOEs can also be made soon. It's not clear whether the EEC will seek fresh applications or find the remaining IOEs from the existing pool of 114 applicants. "That decision is left to the Expert Committee," sources said.

"This decision is a landmark decision for following reasons - This was never thought of & tried; it is more than a graded autonomy, it is really a full autonomy to the institutes; the institutes can take their own decisions," HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar tweeted.

"While today's decision gives virtually full autonomy, it will also ensure that no student will be denied opportunity of education with various measures like scholarships, interest waiver, fee waiver and ensure all equity principles," he said in another tweet.