

IIT-Madras seeks German help to check staff crunch

L R Shankar



ACADEMIC COLLABORATION: Bavaria state minister for sciences Wolfgang Heubisch (right) presenting a memento to IIT Madras director M S Ananth on Friday

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Chennai: With engineering colleges in India facing an acute shortage of trained and qualified faculty, Indian Institute of Technology-Madras director M S Ananth on Friday appealed to Germany for help in tackling the crisis.

"In the last three years, the admission of students in undergraduate engineering courses in India has increased from 3 lakh to 9 lakh. Our problem is finding faculty for them. We have new engineering colleges. We started eight new IITs. Our biggest limitation is that only around 1,000 students complete their PhDs in engineering in the entire country every year, whereas we need at least 20,000 more teachers. So we want your help in producing more PhDs," Ananth told Wolfgang Heubisch, minister of sciences in the Bavarian state of Germany, who led a delegation of 19 universities to discuss academic collaboration.

Recalling fondly that the IIT Madras had an over 50-year German connection as it was established with technical support from the then West Germany in 1959, Ananth said: "We can do joint programmes where students spend some time in India and Germany. If we could give degree together that would be wonderful. In these times of globalisation, people want their degrees to be internationally recognised. Therefore, if you have a German university stamp and an IIT stamp on

the certificate, it would be valuable."

Noting that most professors at the IIT Madras who had benefited from the old German connection are on the verge of retirement, Ananth expressed interest in reviving the association so that younger faculty could gain.

He also appealed to Germany to amend its higher education regulations so that joint degrees could be offered through collaboration.

"Awarding two degrees is a problem because when you submit a thesis, you have to declare that it was not submitted in any university in the world. So giving two degrees would mean that for the same thesis a student gets two degrees," he said.

Heubisch called for strengthening academic relations and continuing student exchange programmes. "I want more Indian students to come to Bavaria and German students to come to Chennai," he said.

Earlier, IIT Madras deputy director V G Idichandy signed a memorandum of understanding with Klaus Meyer-Wegener, vice president, University of Erlangen.

The German delegation also called on higher education minister K Ponnudiyil here.

An MoU was signed between HOF University of Applied Sciences, Bavaria, and PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore on the occasion.

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