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Law to rein in tech colleges

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Burdwan, Oct. 3: The government would soon bring a law to put a leash on private engineering colleges, the chief minister said today.

"We are getting numerous complaints about irregularities in private engineering colleges. A legislation is necessary to stem the rot," Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee said while addressing the 31st state convention of the Students' Federation of India (SFI) here, about 115 km from Calcutta.

Bhattacharjee said there were nine private engineering colleges in the state a couple of years ago. There are 62 now.

"We have reports that the standard of education in private engineering colleges is not quite up to the mark. They are taking huge admission fees from students, but teachers are not getting regular salaries. Moreover, laboratories and other facilities in such colleges are very poor," he added.

Officials at Writers' Buildings said the government has already begun formulating the law on the management of private engineering colleges. The matter has already been referred to the law minister, Nisith Adhikary.

The new state SFI secretary, Apurba Chatterjee, welcomed the chief minister's announcement. "The private colleges are fleecing poor students by asking them to pay exorbitant tuition fees — sometimes about Rs 1 lakh a year. However, such colleges neither have proper infrastructure nor good teachers. A legislation will help the government oversee the academic activities of such institutions better."

The chief minister again lamented that the Left Front government had failed to ensure cent per cent literacy in the state. "Nearly 30 per cent of the population is still left out of the literacy programme."

He, however, expressed satisfaction that the National Institute of Sciences is being set up in the state. The Prime Minister would lay its foundation stone at Salt Lake end-October.

"It's a piece of good news that we will have the National Institute of Sciences, modelled after Bangalore," Bhattacharjee said, adding that his government had sought Delhi's nod for setting up two more medical colleges.



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