

## Nanotechnology to flying, Dibrugarh varsity lures students

For students in the northeast who often migrate outside their home state for better education, here's some good news. Assam's Dibrugarh university is planning a number of job-oriented courses, including one in nanotechnology and a flying course for commercial pilots.

The university has been given a grant of Rs.146 million for infrastructure development by the 12th Finance Commission, said Vice Chancellor K.K. Deka.

'Besides upgrading the existing infrastructure, we plan to add an IT building and a core engineering building with the grant. Also, we plan to develop infrastructure for clinical research, for biotechnology and nanotechnology,' Deka told IANS.

'Hopefully, the work should be completed in two years,' he added.

Dibrugarh University, which was established in 1965, is one of the premier universities of the state, attracting students from not only Assam but some neighbouring states also.

'Because of lack of proper infrastructure, many students of Assam, and indeed the northeast, leave their home states for higher studies outside. With the development that we have undertaken, we should hopefully be able to address this issue,' Deka said.

Some of the other courses which the university plans to start are bachelors in electronic and communication engineering, material sciences and nanotechnology and one in performing arts too.

The university will be one of the few in the country to offer a course in actuarial sciences, where mathematical and statistical methods are applied for risk assessment in the insurance and finance sectors.

'What we are concentrating on is quality, job-oriented courses to the students. In recognition of the demand for professionals in the tea industry, which is of utmost importance in Assam, we started a postgraduate diploma in tea technology and plantation management last year. And it has got a very good response,' he said.

Deka, although upbeat about the developments taking place, feels that changing the mindset of the people will be crucial.

'You can't have quality, job-oriented courses for subsidised rates. A student won't mind spending heavily on courses in institutions outside Assam, but here they are just not ready to do so,' he said.

The university recently introduced a range of subjects - computers, petroleum technology and management to mass communication, journalism, rural development and women's writings.

Rashmi Borah, a student of the university doing her bachelors in education, said the initiatives would help in attracting students.

'After school, most of the students here either go to Guwahati for their higher studies or outside the northeast itself. But with so many courses and all very job-oriented, I am sure most students will now

rethink their decision to leave the state.

'The course in tea management especially is very good. It addresses the need of one of the most important industries of the state,' she said.

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