

IISER to open doors of science on August 16

Dr Ganesh appointed city IISER director

BY A STAFF REPORTER
reporters @sakalheratd.com

NCL: Breaking away from traditional modes of learning, the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) designed to integrate science education with research, Pune and Kolkata, will throw open its doors to the first batch of students on August 16.

Keeping flexible education programmes as its focus, this novel project by the government, through the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) based on recommendation of Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) on March 4, 2005, will see about 150 students in its first batch at its two institutes in Kolkata and Pune. A third batch is likely to start at Chandigarh on similar lines.

Dr K N Ganesh, Deputy Director of National Chemical Laboratories (NCL), has been appointed as Professor and first Director of IISER, Pune. The Project Director of IISER and NCL Director, Dr S Sivaram, announced the commencement of the course from August 16 at the Innovation Park.

This institute, being an autonomous body, has seven permanent teaching staff and in addition, there are eight professors from various fields who will be a part of the visiting faculty.

Interestingly, all selected students will receive a monthly fellowship of Rs 3,000, facilitating them to fund their own tuition fee and hostel stay, said Sivaram, adding that this was possible with the government funding.

On how NCL will support this 'baby', Sivaram said, the infrastructure and administration will be looked after by NCL and about 10,000

sq feet of building of the NCL Innovation Park will be used as classroom and laboratory

With this being a residential course, the NCL hostel will be refurbished to accommodate students until the 100 acres plot adjacent to the NCL will be developed for the purpose, said Sivaram.

The students, for this first batch, were selected from the IIT-JEE list and 10 more students will be selected from Olympiad and KVPY who will undergo a counselling session on July 23.

Next year onwards, Sivaram said, there would be a common entrance test for the science institutes as well.

Ganesh said that the idea is to integrate all the natural sciences under one roof. "Inter-disciplinary approach will be adopted and integration of different concepts will be looked at." Sivaram said, "This will adopt a new way of teaching sciences and have the best faculty from India and abroad."

On Wednesday, a discussion will be held on various topics related to this course. The objective is to come out with a seamless curriculum and provide holistic education. "No early specialisations for students," said Sivaram, adding, "It will be a gradual and slow process as they have to move from topic to topic while researching on a core subject."

As many as 83 students have been short-listed for IISER Pune and 79 for Kolkata, probably 70 would join here in Pune, said Sivaram. On the reservation issue, he said that they are following the IIT rules 2006 and would set new rules in the coming year.

Tie-ups with research laboratories under the Departments of Atomic Energy, Space, Science and Technology and Biotechnology and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research will provide extensive opportunities to students on the basis of campus placements. Ganesh said that the projected strength of each IISER in the next five years is around 2,000 students and 200 faculty members.



Dr K N Ganesh