

WOK THE TALK

IIT-B to add Chinese to its courses

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Forget Spanish or Italian, students at the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B) will now learn to speak Mandarin. The premier institute at Powai is planning to offer a course in the language for its students. Not only will they learn the language, but also about the social set-up and work culture in China. Universities from China are showing interest in collaborating with IIT-B and the institute sees a growing opportunity for its students in terms of higher education, placements and business opportunities.

The international relations office in IIT-B is finalizing the course in collaboration with faculty from a university in Beijing. The dean of international relations, Subhasis Chaudhari, told TOI, "Opportunities in China are emerging both in terms of academics and placements. Chinese universities are looking forward to collaborate with our institute. The increasing dynamism between the two countries will create opportunities for students in future. Some students from the institute have already shown a keen interest in learning the language."

He added that for students at any level, if they are interested in moving to the country, the language course will be helpful. "Knowing the language and culture of China will also help in setting up business ventures there," he said.

According to an official from the international relations' office, the focus will not just be on the language. "Students will be taught about the Chinese work culture, the society, its customs and traditions," said the official. Usually, teacher training students in foreign languages at IIT-B also screen movies for them as part of the course. The language will be offered in two modules and will be a year-long course. The faculty for teaching the course would be called in from Beijing Jiaotong University. The university is seeking visa for their teacher to teach in India. Once the visa process is finalized, IIT-B will advertise about the course for its students by July-end. In the first year, the maximum capacity of students to take the course will be around 70, said Chaudhari. The Beijing Jiaotong University might tie up with IIT-B for other academic courses as well.

Ravi Sinha, the placement chairperson at IIT-B, said, "Though Chinese companies do not hire people at entry level from foreign countries, IIT-B is always open to collaborations with them during placements."

The international relations office offers French and German, apart from Japanese, which was started recently. All these courses are offered in two batches with 30 students each.

