

IITs want more foreign students to crack JEE

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Mumbai: To promote brand IIT more aggressively among South Asian and African countries, the premier institutes have decided to seek help from the external affairs ministry to promote the 10% supernumerary quota for foreign nationals, which has largely remained vacant till now.

To increase the number of overseas students, IITs now want to focus on South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Maldives.

One African country, Ethiopia, and a far-east country, Singapore, would also be part of the fresh

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Foreign nationals have to appear in the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) and compete in the general category, which has 50% seats of the total capacity of 18 IITs and Indian School of Mines (ISM) Dhanbad.

The 18 IITs and ISM Dhanbad, together, offer over 10,000 seats for various undergrad programmes. "We conduct entrance exams in a few centres abroad but only a handful of NRIs and students with Overseas Citizenship of India take the test and less than 50 crack it," said an IIT official.

IITs want...

brand-building exercise. IITs want to have more entrance examination centres in South Asian and African countries and want cooperation from embassies to promote the 10% quota created a few years ago. IIT Bombay director Devang Khakhar, who is meeting MEA officials in Delhi on Friday to discuss the strategy, confirmed the development.

"The 10% additional seats for foreign nationals have remained largely vacant. Things can change if we can spread word through different channels and have entrance examination centres in more countries," Khakhar told dna.

"This would also help strengthen India's soft power globally, especially among neighbours," said an IIT Delhi professor.

The move also aims to position

IITs better in the global rankings of universities, where the number of foreign students is a major parameter. Despite having the best talents from India and a huge spending, none of the IITs find mention among the top 200 global institutes. This has been a cause of concern not only for the IITs but also for the HRD ministry.