Centre of Excellence

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Ladies and Gentlemen – today is a special day in many respects and it is a particular pleasure that we meet in the presence of Professor Debes Kumar Das, the Honourable Minister in charge of information technology.

This University is affectionately known as BE College, now the Bengal Engineering and Science University. Its record as an institution of learning and research of the highest quality speaks for itself. Over its history of 150 years, it can claim a substantial output of highly–trained young people, who are now out in the real world, improving the quality of life for society as a whole.

It is not surprising that all of Indian philosophy, which has evolved over many thousands of years, gives the highest respect to those who selflessly disseminate knowledge. I therefore salute the academics assembled here, including Professor Banerjea (Vice–Chancellor), Professors Jaya Sil and Banyopadhyay.

We are here to celebrate the opening the Centre of Excellence on Soft Computations in Materials Science and Engineering. Needless to say that this is an important initiative which has the key characteristics which ensure its success:

Firstly, it deals with interdisciplinary science. Students will be exposed to diverse staff with deep knowledge in particular subjects. They will leave this unit with the unique ability to communicate between subjects.

Secondly, it emphasises the transition from qualitative to quantitative – the ultimate goal of science it to express nature in the language of mathematics whilst maintaining physical principles.

This is of course the age of materials and information technology. What better time to unite the two. I believe that this is the first such Centre anywhere in the world, although there are many which pay lip–service to the subject.

It is particularly important that the University as a whole has recognised the importance of this venture, by establishing a specific Master of Science Degree Course, to focus education on computational materials science. This is a first in India and is now one of two which exist in the world as a whole. Some of these students from this course will undoubtedly stay on to conduct Ph.D. research in their yearning for depth – others will lead industry and commerce.

In most materials, there is a nucleation stage which is difficult because barriers have to be surmounted to create a new entity. This is why clouds exist but rain only follows after water droplets can form. This is followed by growth.

I cannot believe how rapidly this wonderful Centre of Excellence has germinated after it was casually mooted some two years ago. The credit for this is entirely that of the dedicated staff of BESU and the education officials of the State of Bengal. This is a fine example of the triumph of common sense and constructive engagement. I thank you all for your hard work and wish you the greatest success ever. We shall all be following your work for decades to come and keep an eye on the proceedings.