BHU gets Unesco fund to set up peace chair

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Lucknow: Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has become the first Indian university to establish a chair for ‘Peace and Inter-Cultural Understanding’, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The university has signed an MoU with the UN University for Peace, Costa Rica and Oslo-based Peace Research Institute. A formal announcement of the chair was made by BHU Chancellor Dr Karan Singh on December 25.

The chair, which has been established at the university’s Malviya Centre for Peace Research (MCPR), will be studying different religions and cultures to find solutions for global peace and harmony.

This is one of the first full-fledged chairs on the issue of peace and inter-cultural understanding established by UNESCO in the country. “The issue of peace and building inter-cultural relations need extensive research. At the moment, when the world is trying to find answers to problems like violence resulting from lack of harmony in different religions, such chairs and centres could help in finding solutions to the problem,” said Prof Priyankar Upadhyaya, the in-charge of MCPR.

The chair will begin functioning from next academic session. The UNESCO will provide Rs 50 crore to the centre for undertaking research activities.

The centre will also bring out teaching and training manuals for including inter religious and inter cultural understanding in different curriculums in various institutions across the subcontinent and world.

“The chair is the first of its kind in the country and it is being established as an international resource centre. The chair will be a platform for dialogues for peace education and conflict analysis of different cultures. We will be inviting experts from various fields to work towards bringing different religions and cultures together for peace building efforts,” said Prof Rajesh Singh, chairman of Information and Public Relations Cell.

“Apart from research activities, we will also be offering courses of different levels, which are being designed according to the guidelines of the chair. Topics likes national integration and common links between different cultures and religions would be studied here,” he added.