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Jadavpur University alumnus from Australia donates Rs 2 crore for artificial intelligence research

Swapan Chakravarty, a former adjunct professor who graduated from the electrical engineering department of JU in 1974, said research in the field of AI will raise the profile of the university and draw the industry's attention

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Swapan Chakravarty

A former student of Jadavpur University, who lives in Australia, has donated ₹2.2 crore to the university, for carrying out research in the field of artificial intelligence (AI).

Swapan Chakravarty, a former adjunct professor who graduated from the electrical engineering department of JU in 1974, said research in the field of AI will raise the profile of the university and draw the industry’s attention.

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The alumnus, who did his masters in AI from Curtin University in Perth in 1992, signed an agreement late last month to donate the amount.
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“AI, which I pursued in 1992, has gained supremacy in all fields today. My alma mater must focus on this field as the future is AI. Industry reaches out to campus only when the institution works in an advanced discipline like AI. This is how a

campus grows,” said Chakravarthy, who also worked with various corporate houses.

The agreement that he signed with the university says the contribution will be used to aid two JU students financially (pursuing a master’s or PhD in any discipline) in the field of artificial intelligence in each academic year.

The money will also be used for collaborative research with other institutes in the field of AI “whereby JU gains collateral academic and intellectual benefits,” says the agreement.

The remainder of the amount donation be used judiciously to fund undergraduate students and any other postgraduate students.

Sanjay Gopal Sarkar, a joint registrar of JU, said an award will be given in the memory of Sadhana Chakraborty, mother of Swapan Chakravarthy, out of the contribution.

“These days AI is being used extensively in the field of humanities. So, students from any discipline can pursue research in AI from the donation,” said Chakravarthy.

“JU has played a crucial role in whatever I have become. So, I want my alma mater to grow in the advanced field.”

This newspaper reported in July that several colleges and universities were introducing courses in fields like artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), which are fast emerging as the more sought-after disciplines among bright students.

Ramakrishna Mission Residential College, Narendrapur, has decided to introduce an MSc course in AI and data science from the 2024-25 academic year.

St Xavier’s University has decided to introduce BTech programmes in two areas — AI and machine learning and computer science and engineering next year.

A JU official said the fund constraint that the university is encountering owing to depletion in support both from the state and central government, has come in the way of pursuing research in the field of AI.

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The Telegraph reported on July 16 that the university had a “net deficit” of ₹22 crore in 2022-23 and ₹19 crore in 2023-24 following a mismatch in income and expenses. “So we are looking up to support from former students because only contribution from them can enable us to work in the field of AI,” said a JU official.

Chakravarthy said the universities in the US have developed their corpus by offering consultancy.

“This happens when an institute works in the field of cutting-edge technologies. Then the industry comes to the campus to seek their consultancy. JU should work towards this direction,” he said.



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