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'From rented rooms to Simrol's skyline, it was a challenging journey till IIT-I'

Faculty Member Prashant Kodgire Interacts With TOI

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Indore: Seventeen years ago, Indian Institute of Technolog-Indore (IIT-I) began not with sweeping boulevards or glass-fronted laboratories, but inside borrowed classrooms and temporary corridors. On Feb 17, as the institute marks its foundation day, the journey from two rented campuses to a sprawling academic city in Simrol reads like a quiet chronicle of India's expanding scientific ambition.

Today, the institute hosts more than 3,400 students across nearly 60 undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes, reflecting rapid academic expansion and a steadily rising national stature in research, innovation and technology education. In recent years, IIT-I has introduced programmes in artificial intelligence, data science, sustainability and space science, aligning its academic direction with India's future technology priorities. The appointment of former ISRO chairman K Sivan as chairperson of the board of governors in Sept 2023 further aligned the institute with national scientific leadership.

Established in 2009 as part of India's new generation of IITs, the institute first functioned from the Institute of Engineering and Technology at Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, mentored by IIT-Bombay, with Pradeep Mathur as founding director. Academic milestones since then underline the scale of transformation while 101 BTech students graduated in the first convocation in 2013, the 2025 graduating class expanded to 813 students across six programmes, signalling both institutional maturity and widening academic reach.

Faculty member in biosciences Prashant Kodgire, who taught in the temporary DAVV campus in 2012 and continues at Simrol today, recalls the transition as both demanding and formative. "It was a challenging time. We had to commute constantly between classrooms, makeshift laboratories and departments spread across different buildings. Space was limited, but we managed. The institute began with 120 BTech students and has now grown to around 3,400 students across nearly 60 programmes. The first graduating batch in 2013 had 101 BTech students and a few PhD scholars and we operated largely in makeshift labs. Today, the journey is from those temporary labs to five dedicated research towers. We have seen an organic growth, and our core strength today is research," he said.

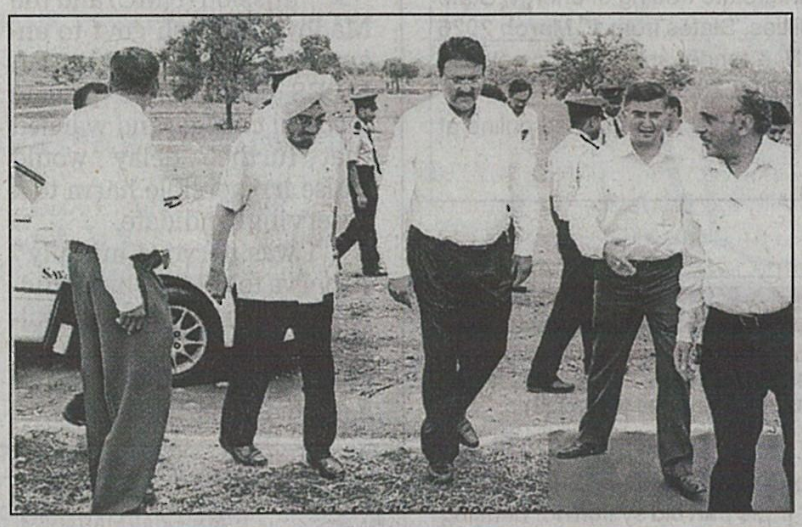
Even in those uncertain beginnings, permanence was already envisioned. On Feb 17, 2009, Union HRD minister Arjun Singh laid the foundation stone of the permanent 501 acre Simrol campus, about 25 km from Indore. The decisive shift came in Oct 2015, with full academic operations beginning there in Feb 2016, replacing improvised spaces with purpose-built laboratories, smart classrooms and dedicated research infrastructure.

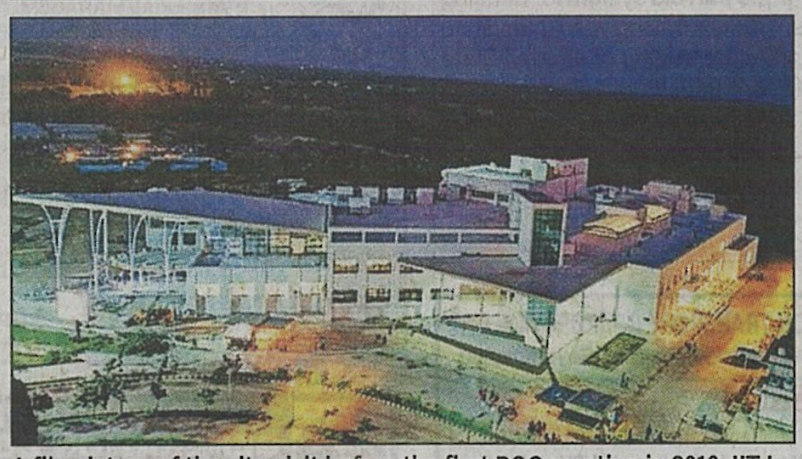
Today, the campus presents a striking contrast to its origins. Student-run startups, innovation clubs and informal maker spaces extend learning beyond textbooks.

Research momentum reflects this steady evolution. IIT-I has undertaken over 816 sponsored projects, secured 115 granted patents and filed 237 patent applications, signalling deepening innovation alongside academic growth.

In NIRF 2025, IIT-Indore ranked 27th overall, 24th in research and 12th among engineering institutes. A year earlier, NIRF 2024 placed it 16th in engineering, 33rd overall and 27th in research institutions, underscoring its evolving national standing.

IIT-INDORE 17TH FOUNDATION DAY





A file picture of the site visit before the first BOG meeting in 2010. IIT-I campus in Simrol

BTech in Environ Eco, Sustainable Engineering launched at IIT-I

Indore: IIT Indore will introduce two new undergraduate programmes from the July 2026 academic session, including a first-of-its-kind BTech in environmental economics and sustainable engineering with 20 seats, as the institute strengthens its focus on climate, healthcare and data-driven technologies, said IIT-I director Suhas Joshi.

The sustainability programme will centre on three core verticals, energy, water and climate systems, and environmental economics.

The second programme, BTech in biomedical engineering and data science, will offer 30 seats and focus on health informatics, artificial intelligence in healthcare and advanced health-data analytics, reflecting the deepening convergence of medicine, engineering and big-data science.

"The BTech combining environmental economics with sustainable engineering responds directly to climate and resource challenges. Students will be trained in sustainable materials, mobility, water systems, systems modelling and data-driven decision-making so that engineering solutions remain economically viable and environmentally resilient," Joshi said.

TOI SPEAKS TO IIT-I DIRECTOR

In NIRF 2025, IIT Indore ranked 27th overall, improving from 30th last year, 24th in research from 27 earlier, and 12th among engineering institutes compared with 16 previously,

Joshi said India's proposed Rs 1 lakh crore Research, Development and Innovation scheme would be crucial for enabling high-risk, high-reward work in artificial intelligence, semiconductors, biotechnology and clean energy. TNN