

SETBACK | Union govt “rejects” proposal, asks institute to prioritise expansion in Indore

Centre pulls plug on IIT-I Ujjain satellite campus

Atul Gautam
INDORE

In a major setback for Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav's long-standing ambition to establish an IIT campus in his hometown, the Union government has effectively buried the proposal for a satellite campus of IIT Indore in Ujjain, directing the premier institute to abandon the plan and focus exclusively on expanding its main campus in Indore.

The Centre has declined to grant the mandatory approval from the Union Cabinet, making it virtually impossible for the project to move forward. The proposal, first announced in 2020 when Mohan Yadav was the state's Higher Education Minister, had been projected as a transformative initiative for Ujjain's higher education landscape.

Highly placed sources said the Union government conveyed its decision in un-



PHASE III EXPANSION: FOCUS SHIFTS TO SIMROL

- IIT INDORE to prioritise Phase III expansion.
- ESTIMATED PROJECT COST: Nearly Rs 650 crore. Other infrastructure expansion takes amount to Rs 1,200 crore.
- EXPANSION to take precedence over establishing any satellite campus.



equivocal terms, advising IIT Indore to shelve the Ujjain proposal and instead prioritise the institute's ambitious expansion at its Simrol campus, estimated to cost nearly Rs 1,200 crore.

"The institute has been clearly told to forget about opening a satellite campus in Ujjain. The priority is expansion of the existing campus," a

senior IIT Indore official said on condition of anonymity.

Officials said the Centre was unconvinced about the academic and administrative rationale for setting up another campus barely 50 kilometres from the parent institute. It stressed that the existing infrastructure should first be fully utilised and expanded before any new campus is considered.

The sources further re-

WHY CENTRE SAID NO

- NO UNION Cabinet approval for the project.
- EXPANSION of IIT Indore's Simrol campus given priority.
- CENTRE questioned the need for another campus about 50 km away.
- EXISTING infrastructure should be fully utilised first.
- IIT INDORE advised to become more financially self-reliant before proposing new campuses.

vealed that the Union government advised IIT Indore to attain greater financial self-reliance before proposing any additional campuses. Even if such a proposal is taken up in the future, it should preferably be outside Madhya Pradesh rather than within the same state, the sources added. (More on pg-2)

▶ Continued on | P8

Centre pulls...

The decision effectively ends a proposal that had generated considerable political and public expectations.

After becoming Chief Minister, Mohan Yadav had sought to keep the idea alive through the establishment of an IIT Indore "prelude centre" in Ujjain in 2024 under a 50:50 funding model, with the state government and the institute sharing the cost.

While the state government projected the facility as the foundation of a future satellite campus, IIT Indore consistently maintained that it was merely a "prelude centre" and not an extension campus.

The Centre's rejection now exposes that distinction more starkly than ever.

Sources in the state's technical education department confirmed that the satellite campus proposal has been dropped, with no possibility of revival in the foreseeable future.

"The IIT satellite campus proposal stands closed. The government is now exploring the possibility of bringing another premier educational institution or a large academic project to Ujjain," a senior departmental official said.

The development is a major setback for the state's efforts to establish a second IIT presence in Ujjain and a political blow to one of the Chief Minister's marquee education initiatives.

Contd. Page - 08