

PMO monitoring our COVID-19 vaccine projects: IIT-I director

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Indian Institute of Technology Indore (IIT-I) acting director Neelesh Kumar Jain here on Sunday stated that the COVID-19 vaccine projects undertaken by the institute were being monitored at the highest level.

"We have got two projects which are working on developing vaccines for coronavirus. Both of them are monitored at the PMO-level," he said during an online address to students and faculty members on the occasion of International Yoga Day.



Jain said that very few academic institutions in the country are working on making vaccines for the COVID-19 and IIT Indore is among them.

To resume research activities and particularly to accelerate the research related to coronavirus vac-

cine development, the institute has asked all postdocs to come and stay on the campus as commuting daily from the city can't be allowed.

But some postdocs, especially those who are married, are reluctant to come and reside on the campus. They want the same privilege which has been extended to some faculty members. Some faculty live in the city and visit the institute daily. Jain touched upon the issue during his address on Sunday.

"Ideal situation would have been that all teaching and non-teaching staff and all students remain inside the campus at these difficult times

of COVID-19 as our campus is the safest place in Indore. But we don't have enough residences for faculty and staff members," Jain said.

"We have 143 faculty members against 54 available residential units. Similarly, we have 220 staff against 144 residential units in studio apartments. However, we have surplus hostel units. We have around 750 students against our hostel intake capacity of 2500 students.

So staff and faculty members living outside the campus have no choice but to commute from the city daily. But students can be accommodated easily," he said.

CONTD. ON P8

PMO monitoring our

Of late, some postdocs and PhD students had written emails against the institute's order regarding shifting to the campus, and Jain appealed to them not to write angry emails, instead discuss their issues with authorities. Clearing the air on the order, the director stated that those students who work on theoretical or computational aspects can stay at home. "Only those students who are working on the experimental aspect, are asked to come inside the campus and compete quarantine period so that they can work in labs," he added. IIT Indore was among the residential institutes which anticipated the effect of COVID-19 and had taken early steps to deal with it. During the lockdown period, the institute received 40 research proposals from its faculty members. "Of them, 25 proposals were related to COVID-19," Jain said.