

We're prepared for another site: Mathur

CONFUSION CONFOUNDED State govt kept us in dark over allocation of forestland, says IIT-I director

HT Correspondent

✉ editorbhopal@hindustantimes.com

INDORE: Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Indore director Professor Pradeep Mathur has said that the Madhya Pradesh government has kept them in the dark over allocation of forestland and that he has neither received any official intimation from the state government nor union human resource development ministry (MoHRD) regarding trouble for their land at Simrol, about 30 kilometres from here.

Mathur was reacting to newspaper reports that the proposal for the IIT-I was put on hold after the environment ministry's forest advisory committee rejected the MP government's proposal to divert forestland for the institute.

Mathur told Hindustan Times, "We are ready to look for alternate site as a minimum of 500-acre is required for the IIT campus." There is confusion now because IIT-I had performed the ground breaking ceremony for nearly 9-kms length boundary

OPERATING FROM IET CAMPUS

■ Presently IIT-I operates from Institute of Engineering Technology (IET) campus of the Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya (DAVV) on Khandwa Road. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IET for building and campus sharing expires in June this year.

■ IIT-I presently offers three courses and has student strength of 236 B Tech, 34 research scholars and nearly 50 faculty members.

■ Research scholars and faculty members have to share space. New batch starts in July and student intake would increase and there would be shortage of space.

wall only a week back on IIT-I second foundation day. The construction was to start soon, but now it is on hold.

Mathur claimed that he came to know of the union environment ministry not granting clearance for land use conver-

sion over 80-hectares of forest land at Simrol. The State government had allotted 501-acre land including some forest land at Simrol, when the IIT started in July 2009.

Mathur said the state government did not tell them about the hassles regarding the land. There is a 198-acre pocket under forest department. When IIT-I conducted a survey for the 500-acre campus those carrying out the job were stopped by forest officials on entering the said pocket. It then came to light that this land belonged to the forest department.

Mathur said there are two other contentious issues. Two pockets of 40-acre and 29-acre were being resided on. The state government got it cleared for IIT-I campus by granting monetary compensation and land in exchange for land. Though the state government claimed to have given compensation, people still continue to encroach over the land. Mathur said he had taken up the issue with chief

CONTINUED ON P4

'WE'RE READY TO LOOK FOR ALTERNATE SITE'

secretary and district collector. Mathur said, "We are scheduled to go ahead with meeting for finalizing from among eight short listed contractors including six from abroad for preparing master plan for the land".

He said, "The state government had promised granting 500-acre land for setting up IIT in the state. It is their lookout how they do it.

There have been delays on their part and the present hurdle also arose as the proposal sent by state government for carrying out afforestation drive on another land in lieu of this forest land at Simrol was found unsuitable for the purpose and scuttled by the Union Environment Ministry".

Students pleading anonymity expressed their dissatisfaction with the state of affairs. They opined that all IITs have large grand campuses of their

own, while they are presently on a rented premises and all hopes of moving to new campus soon seem dashed with this latest development. //