

New campus for IIITD&M soon

Stone to be laid on 100 acres in Melakottaiyur on Vandalur-Kelambakkam Road

Ajai Sreevatsan

CHENNAI: The Indian Institute of Information Technology Design and Manufacturing (IIITD&M), which has been functioning for two years in a make-shift place within IIT Madras, will soon get a new campus, said Information Technology Minister Poongothai Aladi Aruna.

The Minister, who visited the IIT-Madras campus on Wednesday, told *The Hindu* that the foundation stone for the new campus on 100 acres in Melakottaiyur village on the Vandalur-Kelambakkam Road would soon be laid in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister M. K. Stalin and Union Minister for Human Resource and Development Kapil Sibal.

The construction would take about two years from then on.

"The file is with the Animal Husbandry Department currently because it owns a section of the land in the proposed site. It is just a matter of time before the government provides the land free of cost to the institution," she said.

The IIITD&M offers courses in Computer Engineering, Electronics D&M and Mechanical D&M.

All courses are linked to the base engineering programme but would be markedly different from purely Electronics or Computer Science courses. "We adopt an experiential learning approach. There will be more focus on laboratory work and experimentation," said R.Gnanamoorthy, deputy director of IIITD&M.

"Many engineering graduates today are theoreticians. We are trying to produce graduates who will be able to design products. For example, there is a graphics art course as part of the engineering programme. We want our computer engineers to go into electronic product design instead of competing for IT jobs," he added.

The institution currently has student strength of 155. There are plans to raise the strength to 1,200 within the next 10 years.

M.S. Ananth, director, IIT-Madras, said that the institution would focus on imparting knowledge about design and development of products. "There are very little 'Made-in-India' tags in the market. We are losing out on Intellectual Property Rights. This scenario has to change."

According to Dr. Ananth, there was a space crunch on the campus and a dedicated

campus for the Design Institute was an urgent need.

"We already have to expand facilities at the IIT because of the OBC quota. Since the government has given a pledge that the new quota would not decrease the number of general category seats, we are looking at something like an additional strength of 8,000 students in IIT-M. Since the campus is a forest reserve, the constructed area cannot exceed 25 per cent," he said.

There are three other IIITD&Ms in the country. They are in Gwalior, Allahabad and Jabalpur.

CBSE marks

Speaking about the recent proposal to consider class 12 marks for IIT entrance, Dr. Ananth said that it was a welcome move as it would reduce the stranglehold that coaching centres had on IIT admissions.

"Coaching institutes in Kota have an arrangement with schools whereby a candidate preparing for the JEE gets attendance for a whole year at his school in Delhi without ever attending class. Schooling is a very important part of a student's life as it builds character and teaches things beyond the syllabus," he said.



HAVING A WORD: Information Technology Minister Poongothai Aladi Aruna in discussion with IIT-M Director M.S. Ananth (centre) and Deputy Director of IIITD&M R. Gnanamoorthy during her visit to IIT-M on Wednesday.