

7th Foundation Day, IIT Mandi

Director's Speech

Prof. Timothy A. Gonsalves

The Foundation Stone was laid in Kamand on 24th February 2009, before IIT Mandi had any faculty, students, staff. The 1st Batch started in July 2009 in IIT Roorkee. Classes began in Mandi from August 2010. New construction started in Kamand in April 2012. Since then, we have made rapid progress, earning the distinction of being the first of the new IITs to develop and use its permanent campus. In a few weeks, practically all students will be enjoying our residential campus. The majority of our faculty will be living here, and nearly 90% have their offices+labs here. In this respect, I'm proud to say that we are still the leader of new IITs. From March, in Mandi we will have only 3-4 research labs plus 10 faculty with associated research scholars.

Let's look at what the future has in store for us on the construction front:

By June 2016

- 34x houses (1+ 2 bedroom) for staff, Campus School and Community Hall in the North Campus
- 4 hostels with a capacity of 400 students, 24x 3BHK Faculty Houses, 1 Mess in an independent enclave in the North Campus
- Academic block A4 in the South

By December 2016

- 18x 3BHK houses, 3 more academic blocks and a Recreation Centre in the South
- Several more 3BHK and 100-seat hostels in the North

In 2017

- Academic spine, guest house, hospital, etc in North

So, by the end of 2016, we will have an unaccustomed luxury – an excess of space in a fully residential campus. This space will enable us to expand our activities in several directions.

- New Masters Programmes – BioX, Maths, EE are being worked on
- Increase of intake in B.Tech, M.Tech and MSc in the existing disciplines
- We have recently received Rs. 5 crores from DST to setup a Technology Business Incubator. This will be housed along the main road from Kamand to the North Campus. It will provide incubation space and facilities for our own students and faculty entrepreneurs, and for companies from outside IIT that wish to work in collaboration with our faculty and students.
- We currently have 2 Research Centres – AMRC and C4FED. We plan to start 2 more, focussing on Energy and on BioX

For our students, this new space will translate into more and better equipped labs for coursework, projects and research.

In addition, we plan:

- CnP is planning a series of informational and motivational events for 1st and 2nd BTech students. These will especially highlight the opportunities and joys of careers in research, entrepreneurship, social service.
- More visiting faculty and exchange students to further enrich our academic programmes and multi-cultural environment.
- Alumni donations will be used to support economically needy exchange students from IIT Mandi on semester exchanges to TU9.

Partnerships are an integral part of the IIT Mandi culture. This includes team work by students, collaborative academics by faculty, and cooperation with other institutions especially those in our region. Our neighbours with whom we have active cooperations include IHBT, Palampur, IIT Ropar, PGI, Chandigarh, NIT Hamirpur and others.

Today we are honoured to have as our Chief Guest, Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Director, IHBT, Palampur. Since my first visit to IHBT in 2011, several of our faculty in experimental chemistry have had close ties with researchers there. With our nascent and very enthusiastic group in BioX we anticipate that the collaborations between our two institutions will see a quantum leap.

In this connection, I would like to mention that in 2010, we had commissioned an ecological survey of the Kamand campus before starting to think about the Master Plan. This baseline survey has driven many of the architectural and campus usage decisions. We have an active Green Panel, with a full-time Green Consultant, that monitors the construction and operation of the campus from the perspective of the environment. Two years ago, we started a Herbal cum Botanical Garden. This is intended to serve several purposes:

- provide herbs and herbal extracts for use by campus residents
- provide raw materials for research into medicinal properties of Himalayan flora
- provide a space for families and visitors to learn about and enjoy the natural flora of this region
- children's park for the benefit of campus families

In conclusion, I can confidently say that today, after much struggle, IIT Mandi stands on very firm foundations. We are now in a phase of rapid growth in new areas, of consolidation in established areas. The challenge before us is to strive to evermore to *scale the heights*, to ensure that the fruits of our labours benefit the society around us.

Today we will be honouring faculty, students and staff for their exemplary achievements. Our progress so far has been due to herculean efforts by all of us at IIT Mandi. I would like to honour all of you who have shared in making IIT Mandi what it is today. Unfortunately, the Awards Committee has set very stringent criteria such that only a handful were selected for awards. My congratulations to the Awardees and thanks to the many who have contributed and will win awards on other occasions in the future.

Jai Hind