

IIT project is a godsend for Sanguem: Prasad

Q: Why did you decide to push for a campus of the Indian Institute of Technology in Sanguem constituency?

After I was elected as an MLA in 2017 one Shankar Nadkarni brought to my notice that there is around 10 lakh square metre government-owned land in Cotarli village of Sanguem taluka. So I thought that we should make good use of this particular tract of land. Moreover when I came to know that there had been opposition to the IIT project, which had been proposed at Loliem in Canacona taluka, I met Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar suggesting that the project be moved to Cotarli. Curcholem MLA Nilesh Cabral also supported my idea.

Q: How will the proposed IIT project benefit the people of your constituency, which is considered as a backward area?

Let me clarify first: Sanguem is not a backward constituency as we have scenic beauty and

Sanguem MLA **Prasad Gaonkar** tells **Soiru Velip** that the proposed IIT project at Cotarli in Sanguem taluka will give a fillip to development and employment in the area



potentials to develop as a model constituency. But yes, as far as development is concerned, it has been neglected for decades. I as well as our Sangemkars look upon the proposed IIT project as a golden opportunity



which will open doors for development of the entire constituency. This ambitious project will not only help develop and generate employment opportunities in Sanguem but also the surrounding areas in Quepem, Curcholem and Sanvordem.

Q: Can you elaborate on this?

Salaulim dam has been a lifeline for South Goa... but there are hardly any employment opportunities

for the locals. The proposed IIT project will bring about good infrastructure and generate opportunities for business like taxi service, shops and other establishments. Local youth will also get jobs at the IIT campus. Everyone agrees that the mining, which had been a means of livelihood for many people in our area, will not see a major revival: the mining won't be what it used to be. Therefore, I strongly feel that this project will be a golden opportunity for development and employment. Besides, the infrastructure that will be created for the IIT campus will give a fillip to ecotourism, which has huge potential in my constituency.

>continued on Pg 8

IIT project is a godsend for Sanguem: Prasad

>continued from Pg 1

Q: Some farmers are not ready to part with their farmlands for the project...

The farmlands come under Cotarli and Nagvem villages. There is no substance in the farmers' claim that they have been cultivating the fields for a long time. The fields have not been cultivated for the last 15 years... Two farmers might have cultivated the land. Even these two farm-

ers have no objection in parting with the farmlands for the project.

Q: Some farmers have claimed that you have not met them before taking a call on the land. Is it true?

I couldn't attend the first meeting called by the people. But at the second meeting I explained to them how this project will help everybody. I have held at least five meetings at official level.

Q: How you will educate the people, particularly farmers, about the benefits of the proposed IIT project?

I belong to a farmer's family, and will see to it that no injustice is done to farmers vis-à-vis the IIT project. The Union ministry of human resources has already given its approval to the site. The Chief Minister has assured me all support including good

compensation to farmers and those who own the land. Besides, the land losers will get jobs. I think there should be collective efforts to see to it that this project comes to Sanguem constituency... I will soon hold a meeting with the district collector, mamlatdars of Sanguem and Quepem and other concerned officials, as some kind of misunderstanding has cropped up after the notices were issued for land acquisition.

