

US pledges support to develop IIT Gandhinagar

New Delhi, Jan 24, 2015, DHNS:

Two days ahead of US President Barack Obama's visit to New Delhi, Washington on Friday formally pledged its support to develop a premier technical institute set up at the capital of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state, Gujarat.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Human Resource Development Ministry signed a declaration of intent here to develop IIT Gandhinagar, sources told Deccan Herald.

On behalf of the USAID, its administrator Rajiv Shah signed a declaration of intent while Amarjeet Sinha, Additional Secretary, Higher Education, signed the documents for the HRD Ministry, the sources added.

Though collaboration between the USAID and the HRD Ministry will focus on the development of IIT Gandhinagar, sources said that it will help India set up five new IITs, proposed by the government, and develop other existing IITs in the long run. Under the agreement, a joint task force will be set up to develop IIT Gandhinagar.

Joint task force

The task force, to be chaired by a person appointed by the USAID and the HRD Ministry with mutual consent, will serve as a platform for dialogue and the exchange of information on technical assistance.

A consortium of US universities will be formed to help set up academics as well as research and development activities at the institute, the sources said. In 1959, a consortium of nine leading US universities, including the world-famous Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of California, California Institute of Technology, Princeton University, Carnegie Institute of Technology, University of Michigan, and Ohio State University, helped setting up of the IIT-Kanpur.

"IIT Gandhinagar will be developed by a consortium of US universities," the sources said. The USAID will provide technical support for the development of IIT Gandhinagar in terms of "a range of high level analytics, diagnostic and organisational development services."

It will also play a crucial role in convening expertise of the US higher education institutions and private sector companies in order to facilitate advisories and other resources for the development of the premier institute.