



Saturday 11 February 2017

News updated at 10:18 AM IST

New IIMB director 'Rail Raghu' is transport, infrastructure expert

Feb 11, 2017, Ahmedabad, dhns

It has been third time lucky for Professor G Raghuram, faculty at India's premier B-school – IIM, Ahmedabad (IIMA). The man, who is known as 'Rail Raghu' for his close connection with Railways, Prof Raghuram was on Friday appointed as director of IIM, Bangalore.

“He was in the reckoning to take over IIMA as director on two earlier occasions but had to take a backseat as Samir Barua and Ashish Nanda were appointed as IIMA directors,” a senior IIMA professor told DH. “We are, however, happy that he has become third person from IIMA to make it as IIM-B director.”

Raghuram has been a faculty at IIMA since 1985 and currently professor and chairperson of the Public Systems Group at IIMA.

It is believed that Raghuram got backing from Union Minister of HRD Prakash Javadekar to fill in the post vacated by Sushil Vachani at IIMB. “I have spent most of my life on academics, practice impact focus. It is natural that with time one has the urge to build institutions. At a personal level I feel happy and privileged to get this opportunity to work at the great institution that is well-oiled and well-established,” Raghuram told DH.

“IIMB has a strong base and a high quality, top-ranking institution. It is numero uno in many dimensions and we would like to work towards making it sustainable in the long run. However, the ideas still need to get crystallised over time,” he adds.

“For me, first is to understand the culture of the place. Faculty is crucial to define any institution and so is alumni, staff, students, government and even industry,” he says.

Raghuram is known for his specialisation in infrastructure and transport systems as well as logistics and supply chain management. An IIT-Madras and IIMA alumni, Raghuram got his doctorate from Northwestern University in US.

He first came into limelight in 2006, when he wrote a paper on the turnaround of Indian Railways under the then railway minister Lalu Prasad Yadav. Following this, a Railway chair was established at the IIMA for research on the subject. Former rail minister Dinesh Trivedi too is learnt to have sought Raghuram's help in preparing his Railway budget.

“I earned the name of Rail Raghu as Railways has been my passion for over 30 years now. It rubbed off my father who was in Railways and IIMA helped me blossom. Even my projects at IIMA and thesis at PhD were on railways. I hope to keep my passion,” he adds.

Asked how soon he would move in to Bengaluru, Raghuram says that “sooner rather than later”.

“I am excited. I love Ahmedabad but Bengaluru has been sort of second home with my children having studied here and I have many friends and relatives from here and around. I am looking forward to moving here.”