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Indian Institutes of Mobility: Exit at IIMA

Our Special Correspondent

New Delhi, April 27: Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad director Ashish Nanda today stepped down, over one year before his tenure was to end.

Professor Nanda is in favour of autonomy for IIMs and had been a staunch critic of the first draft of the 2015 IIM bill that sought to give operational power of the institutes to the human resource development ministry.

Nanda, a US national, will serve the institute till September 1, IIM Ahmedabad chief administrative officer Manoj Bhatt told **The Telegraph**.

"Professor Nanda has resigned on personal grounds. His resignation has been accepted by the chairman and forwarded to the human resource development ministry," Bhatt said.

The board of governors of the IIM will constitute a search-cum-selection committee to identify the next director. A panel of names will be sent to the HRD ministry for the approval of the appointments committee of the cabinet.

Nanda's tenure would have ended on September 1, 2018. He did not respond to calls on his cellphone from the paper.

Nanda's resignation came over a year after A.M. Naik quit as IIM Ahmedabad chairman. Naik had been instrumental in convincing Nanda, who was then the Robert Braucher Professor of Practice at Harvard Law School, to join as the director of IIM in 2013.

Nanda was said to have been offered incentives over and above the government's pay scale.

Then HRD minister Smriti Irani had been sarcastic about Nanda and then IIM Bangalore director Sushil Vachani during an interview to NDTV in 2015.

"They are foreign citizens, both of them. The beauty in terms of tolerance of this government is that even a foreign citizen can call our free press, wax eloquent about government and system, tell us how our Parliament should legislate," Smriti had said.

Vachani, another American national and management guru, also did not complete his tenure as IIM Bangalore director. He demitted office in April 2016, three months before his term was to end. He too had been critical of the government over alleged interference in the IIMs' affairs.

Before industrialist Kumar Mangalam Birla was appointed as IIM Ahmedabad chairman, then HRD minister Smriti had rejected a panel of names sent for the post last May.

After a lot of discussion and a series of amendments, the IIM bill was introduced in Parliament in the last budget session.

The post of director had been lying vacant in 12 IIMs till February, when the government appointed 10 directors. Of the newly appointed directors, Ganesan Kannabiran has refused to take charge of IIM Gaya.

The IIMs in Kozhikode and Amritsar do not have regular directors for over three years now. Sources said a panel had been finalised for IIM Kozhikode and sent to the appointments committee of the cabinet.