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AP hopeful of IRRI facility in state

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HYDERABAD: Despite a last minute attempt by Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar to whisk away the proposed research facility of the Philippines-based [International Rice Research Institute \(IRRI\)](#) to Patna, AP government officials are confident that the campus will come up only in Hyderabad.

A team of IRRI officials led by its director-general Robert S Zeigler was scheduled to meet chief minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy in [Hyderabad](#) on Wednesday evening. However, in view of the CM's sudden trip to Delhi, the meeting would be possible only on Thursday evening by which time Kiran Kumar is expected back, CMO officials said.

In the meantime, the IRRI team has already landed in Hyderabad. Zeigler had earlier written a letter to the chief minister expressing the keenness of the institute in setting up a research facility in the sprawling Acharya N G Ranga Agricultural University (Angrau) campus at Rajendranagar on the city outskirts.

However, in some last minute concerns for the state, Bihar has suddenly began making moves to grab the IRRI research facility for itself, sources said. According to them, former director-general of Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) Mangala Rai, who hails from Bihar, has been making the moves in [Delhi](#) on behalf of Nitish Kumar.

Bihar is an important rice growing state of [India](#) and is believed to have more area under the rice crop than Andhra Pradesh. However, what influenced the decision of IRRI to set up base in Hyderabad was the infrastructure available here and the status of Angrau.

In his letter to Kiran Kumar Reddy, Zeigler said their decision was influenced by the outstanding campus of Angrau and world class nature of Hyderabad city. "We have a number of partners in the city including the directorate of rice research (DRR), Barwale Foundation, Indian Foundation Seed and Services Association, and International Crop Research Institute for Semi-arid Tropics (Icrisat)," Zeigler said.

However, AP officials are confident that ICCR will not go anywhere. "In the final analysis, the UPA government at the centre will always prefer a Congress state as compared to Bihar where Nitish had recently routed the Congress in the recent assembly elections," one official reasoned.

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