

# Indian Rural Colloquy opens at IIFM to discuss rural development

**STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal**

The 'Indian Rural Colloquy' began on Friday at the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) campus, aiming to inspire meaningful dialogue on rural issues and practical solutions.

Organised by the Transform Rural India (TRI) initiative, the event is part of a nationwide series running from 1 to 8 August.

Inaugurating the colloquy, Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Prahlad Singh Patel described clean, safe and environmentally sensitive panchayats as the cornerstone of prosperous villages. He called for integrating river source conservation into village planning and stressed the importance of strong local leadership and community participation.

A large number of participants



from diverse backgrounds attended the opening session. Rajesh Singh, Senior Practitioner at TRI, said the initiative has been active at the national level for five years and in Madhya Pradesh for the last three. He explained that the goal is to elevate grassroots issues and ensure public voices influence policy decisions. He added that earlier editions in states such as Uttar Pradesh,

Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh have helped bridge the gap between policy and society.

Padma awardee and social worker Janak Palta McGilligan, also present at the event, spoke about the vital role of women's leadership in sustainable rural development. Senior state officials, policymakers, civil society members and rural community representatives were in attendance.