

Dear Prof. Sailer and Dr. Erica,

I am writing this from Kolkata now and I am happy to say that I have excellent news. I fixed a meeting with the Health Minister in Kolkata on the 24th of September and the discussions went as follows.

Initially he reiterated his disappointment with us regarding the method in which the Govt. of West Bengal was 'let down' (as in his words), after the 'tacit' support extended to the CCI partnership with Dr. Kamlesh Kothari. He mentioned that similarly many other NGO's routinely come to the Government, demand support and finally betray the trust that is bestowed on them. I reminded him that though some Indian elements may have made a mistake Prof. Sailer was an honourable man whose only aim is charity without personal gain, and to this end, he has never asked the Govt. or any other body for any monetary help. I also assured him that I am, at present, heading operations in a very successful Craniofacial Hospital in Mangalore and the only reason I am devoting so much of my personal time and effort was to bring up a permanent and viable Craniofacial Centre in Kolkata. I also assured him that this time we would not allow any obstacle to interfere in the set-up of the centre.

I then went on to make a presentation about the type of cases that we hope to tackle and assured him that we hope to rid the state of West Bengal off the problem of Cleft Deformities. I convinced him about our sincerity and forwarded a proposal to him for setting up a cleft centre. I gave our requirements for a cleft institute, which included a piece of land that I was willing to buy, and their help in the form of good will and support in patient identification. For the latter they were very clear that they would do their maximum but regarding land, they were a little cautious. Finally, after many discussions the Minister agreed to give out some space in one of their government hospitals, which showed such availability. They agreed to clear up one portion of such a hospital for our use on terms that they would revamp the interiors and I should bring in equipment to set up a centre for Craniofacial Surgery.