



Orissa may lose IIT to AP

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There seems "nasty" politics is taking centre stage over the decision of setting up an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Orissa.

Union Minister for Human Resources Development (HRD) Arjun Singh, a die hard Congress leader, seems to be determined not to oblige BJD-BJP Government in Orissa to take the political mileage for setting up an IIT in the state.



The MHRD has requested the Planning Commission to include 3 new IITs in the Eleventh Plan period. The budget of each of these new IITs may be as high as Rs. 4000 crores each, sources said.

The Union Minister of State for HRD MAA Fatmi during the inaugural ceremony of a new experiment of the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in Patna has said that "The proposal for one IIT for Bihar, Orissa and another for Western Indian state besides one IIT to Bihar will be included in 11th Five Year Plan".

The mention of Bihar and Orissa in the context of IIT makes sense as both states are in the bottom three (the other being Rajasthan) of HRD Ministry spending with respect to fully centrally funded higher education institutions and neither of them have an HRD funded IIT, IIM, Central University and IISER etc.

The mention of 2 IITs in Orissa probably referred to a new IIT and a proposal for a branch or extension of IIT Kharagpur in Bhubaneswar.

However, even though the 11th Plan proposal is not yet finalised but confidential inquiries reveal that the three new IITs will be in Bihar, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.

And accordingly the HRD Ministry has sent letters to the concerned government of these states.

Moreover reports also mention that the plans for branch campuses have also been stalled.

That is why the people in Orissa are wondering how come state is always at the receiving end of the HRD Ministry.

And despite being in the lowest bottom of HRD funding, Ministry of HRD always skips over Orissa.

Earlier a proposed National Institute of Sciences in Bhubaneswar was shifted to Kolkata and despite protests from people all over Orissa and state's representatives in the parliament roaring over the HRD ministry's antipathy.

Though ultimately the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh had to come to the rescue of Orissa and he granted an NISER to be funded by the DAE.

Now again HRD Ministry has once again overlooked Orissa with respect to the IITs.

This time it seems Orissa was superseded by the Congress ruled Andhra Pradesh, which earlier in the year was awarded not one but two upgrades to IIT cousins: Andhra University Engineering College and Osmania University Engineering College were earlier included in the list to be upgraded as IESTs (Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology).

Thus Andhra gets a new IIT and 2 IIT like institutions funded by HRD Ministry.

The people in general and non resident Oriyas in particular of Orissa have now believe that HRD Ministry under Mr. Singh is nourishing personal grudge against the state for which the states run by UPA partners are being benefited by the HRD Ministry.

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