

## Govt rules out IIT in Orissa

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The government on Tuesday turned down the demand for setting up an IIT in Orissa saying that it had already granted approval for three such institutes in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Amid loud protests from MPS from Orissa, Minister of State for HRD D Purandeshwari told the Lok Sabha that the location of the three new IITs had

been decided on the basis of recommendations made by the Planning Commission and Prime Minister's Scientific Advisory Council.

BJD member Brij Kishore Tripathy, who raised the issue in a calling attention motion, deplored that Orissa did not have a single central institution of higher education and had been neglected for long. Besides an IIT, he also demanded an IIM for the state and asked the government to approve a proposal by IIT Kharagpur to set up an extension campus in Bhubaneswar.

He claimed that the government had initially cleared an IIT for the state but changed its decision later. Minister of State for HRD, Mohammad Fatmi had stated as much in Patna last year, Tripathy said.

However, Purandeshwari asserted that Fatmi had denied having made any such statement. Setting up a new IIT would involve an expenditure of Rs 1,000 crore besides the cost of acquiring land, she stated.

Concern was also expressed on the issue by other BJD members like Bhartruhari Mehtab and Prasanna Acharya besides Kharabela Swain of BJP.

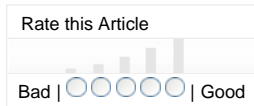
Expressing dissatisfaction with the minister's reply, the NDA members staged a walkout from the House.

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