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Govt says no to an IIT in Orissa

8 May 2007, 1655 hrs IST, PTI

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NEW DELHI: The government Tuesday ruled out setting up an IIT in Orissa, saying it has already approved three such institutes in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Replying to a Calling Attention Motion moved by MPs from Orissa demanding an Indian Institute of Technology, Minister of State

for Human Resource Development D Purandeshwari said the three new IITs were decided on recommendations of the Planning Commission and Prime Minister's Scientific Advisory Council.

Raising the issue, Brij Kishore Tripathy (BJD) said the government had initially approved setting up of an IIT in Orissa but later changed the decision.

"Minister of State for HRD Mohd Fatmi had said in August 2006 in Patna that an IIT will be set up in Orissa... then why the decision was changed?" Tripathy asked.

However, Purandeshwari said Fatmi has denied having made such a statement. A new IIT would cost over Rs 1,000 crore, she said adding the government had never decided to set up such an institute in Orissa.

Dissatisfied with her reply, BJP and BJD members staged a walkout.

Besides an IIT, Tripathy demanded an Indian Institute of Management and asked the government to approve a proposal by IIT-Kharagpur to set up an extension campus in Bhubaneswar.

B Mehtab (BJD) said the UPA government has been ignoring Orissa and sought to know how much funds the HRD ministry had spent for higher education in the state.

BJP member Kharbela Swain asked the government what the criteria was for selecting locations for new IITs, while BJD's Prasanna Acharya said with many new industrial projects coming up, Orissa needed an IIT for skilled manpower.

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