

THE HINDU

Online edition of India's National Newspaper

Wednesday, May 09, 2007

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- Issue emotive for the people of Orissa: BJD
- Setting up a new IIT would cost Rs. 1,000 crores

NEW DELHI: The Government on Tuesday said in the Lok Sabha that it had never agreed to establish an Indian Institute of Technology in Orissa during the 11th Five-Year Plan. The decision to set up three new IITs in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan was taken after receiving the "in-principle" approval of the Planning Commission.

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Responding to a call-attention motion of Braja Kishore Tripathy (BJD) and others regarding the need to set up an IIT in Orissa as proposed in the 11th Five-Year Plan and agreed to by the Government, Minister of State for Human Resource Development D. Purandhareswari said the Plan body approval was given to the proposal based on the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.

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The Ministry, she said, was in the process of deciding the exact locations of IITs in these three States in consultation with the respective Governments. The 11th Plan was not yet finalised, she said.

Expressing dissatisfaction with the Government's response, members of the Biju Janata Dal and the Bharatiya Janata Party staged a walkout.

Seeking clarifications, Mr. Tripathy said that in August 2006, Minister of State M.A.A. Fatmi announced in Patna that an IIT would be set up in Orissa. He also demanded that the Government set up an Indian Institute of Management, saying that the Government was ignoring the claims of the State.

Bhartruhari Mahtab (BJD) said the issue was emotive for the people of Orissa, irrespective of where they resided and that the State. MPs were receiving e-mails from people wanting to know why Orissa was being "denied justice". He sought to know how many Central institutes were funded by the HRD Ministry for Orissa. Dharmendra Pradhan (BJP) also spoke strongly for setting up an IIT in the State while Kharabela Swain (BJP) sought to know the criteria for selecting a State where such institutions were to be set up.

Ms. Purandhareswari said her colleague Mr. Fatmi had denied having made a statement regarding an IIT for Orissa.

She said besides the cost of land and its development, setting up a new IIT would cost Rs. 1,000 crore.

Earlier, the BJP members objected to the absence of Union



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Minister Arjun Singh and said it reflected poorly on the seriousness of the Government. However, Deputy Speaker Charanjit Singh Atwal said the Speaker had acceded to a request from the Union Minister and permitted Ms. Purandharieswari to respond.

When the BJD MPs trooped into the well expressing dissatisfaction, the Speaker urged the members to restore order stating, "Let us not bring down the House."

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