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B Hogg	12(30)
M Johnson*	9(23)
A Kumble*	29.5-4-109-1

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National Network

IIT for Orissa: NDA stages walkout

Express News Service

Posted online: Wednesday, May 09, 2007 at 0000 hrs

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NEW DELHI, MAY 8: Standing up for Orissa's demand for an Indian Institute of Technology, the BJP-led NDA members staged a walkout on the issue in the Lok Sabha as the Government said there were no plans for setting up the technical institute in the state.

The walkout took place after the matter was raised in a calling attention motion in the afternoon session on Tuesday, where BJD and BJP members—among them B K Tripathy, B Mahtab, K Swain, Prasanna Acharya and Dharmendra Pradhan—pointed out that despite a demand for the institute in Orissa, an IIT had not been set up.

The agitated Opposition members even warned that with its coal and iron ore deposits, Orissa could disrupt power supply to other states, but people in the state believed in cooperation.

Tripathy, the BJD's leader in the House, claimed the state had fallen victim to politicking even though, according to him, the need to set up an IIT in Orissa had been proposed in the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Besides, IIT Kharagpur had approved the setting up of a full-fledged campus in the state, for which the Orissa government had promised to give land free of cost. "Will a greenfield IIT be located in the state? Why is there politicking? This is nasty politics," Tripathy said, adding that an IIM should also be set up in the state.

Replying to the calling attention, Minister of State for Human Resources D Purandareswari said while every state would want an IIT, which was a global brand, three regions had been identified on the basis of a report presented C N R Rao. Under those proposals, the IIT in the eastern region would be set up in Bihar.

Regarding the proposal from IIT Kharagpur, she said the expansion would entail huge monetary commitment and it had been decided by the government that it should instead "consolidate" the other IITs. "We haven't accepted the proposal of IIT Kharagpur," the Minister said.

As she proceeded to read out a list of educational institutions in the state that were receiving Central assistance—it was in answer to criticism that the state was being discriminated against—the NDA members began protesting, claiming the assistance was paltry. At this BJP leader Vijay Kumar Malhotra rose to say, "There has been injustice against Orissa," and led the NDA camp in a walkout.

House discusses Right to Education Bill

NEW DELHI: The Right to Education Bill, if passed in Parliament, will ensure free education to all Government school students in the age group of six to 14 years. The same would apply for schools that are fully funded by the Government, Minister of State for Human Resource Development, M A A Fatmi, told the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. Fatmi



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was informing the House about the draft provisions of the Bill, which are still being finalised.

Schools that are aided by the Government, but not fully funded, will have to provide free education to students directly proportion to the aid received. For example, if a school receives 50 per cent of its total annual expenditure as aid from the Government, it will have to provide free education for 50 per cent of the students in the 6-14 age group.

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