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[Orissa Plus]

MPs' protest over IIT issue

Statesman News Service

BHUBANESWAR, May 9: BJD and BJP MPs of Orissa staged a protest at the main gate of Parliament House today demanding establishment of an IIT in the state and denouncing the apathetic attitude of the HRD ministry.

Orissa does not have any institute of national repute ~ that is ~ IIT, IIM IIT or ISI (Indian Statistical Institute), they said.

Yesterday, the demand of these MPs had been rejected by the minister in Parliament and they had staged a walkout after raising the issue through call attention notices.

Orissa is on the path of rapid industrialisation and an IIT would go a long way to help in its economic development by producing highly qualified technical and managerial personnel and also provide the much-needed research and development support, said the protesting MPs.

Mr Pyarimohan Mohapatra, Mr Baijayant Panda, Dr Prasanna Patsani, Prasanna Acharya, Bhatruhari Mahatab, Arjun Sethi, Mohan Jena, Brahma Nanda Panda, Sugrib Singh, Braja Kishore Tripathy, Pramila Bohidar (all BJD), R N Pani, P Majhi, Juel Oram, D Pradhan, S Lath and Bhagirathi Majhi (all BJP) staged the protest.

Mr Sukhdev Singn Dhindsa of Siromani Akali Dal joined in support.

Mr Baijayant Panda, leader of the BJD in Rajya Sabha, maintained that such step-motherly attitude of the Centre had upset the people of Orissa and they will continue to voice their demand.

Significantly, none of the Congress MPs joined the protest, although the BJD-BJP combine had reportedly called upon all MP's from Orissa, irrespective of party affiliations, to stage a joint protest.

Meanwhile, chief minister Naveen Patnaik described the Centre's rejection of Orissa's demand for an IIT as "unfortunate," while BJP leader Mr Biswabhusan Harichandan said his party would take to the streets on this issue. Interestingly, some of the Congress leaders at the state

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level felt that the state deserved to have a IIT.

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