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Political activists, students demand IIT for Orissa

From correspondents in Orissa, India, 08:31 PM IST

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Hundreds of students and political activists Thursday demanded the central government set up an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Orissa, a day after the government said it had no such plan.

Over 300 activists of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) staged demonstration in front of the Raj Bhaban here, the official residence of Governor Rameshwar Thakur.

Students of Rupalli Vidyapitha, a residential school in the city, also launched a signature campaign to **press** the demand for setting up the premier engineering institute.

Orissa does not have any institute of national repute like the IITs, Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) or Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Samir Mohanty said.

The central government had earlier promised to set up an IIT but it did not keep its promise, he alleged.

On Wednesday, Minister of State for Human Resource Development D. Purandeshwari categorically said in parliament that the central government had no plan to set up an IIT in Orissa.

The minister said this replying to call attention notices given by some Biju Janata Dal (BJD) members.

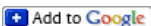
BJD and BJP MPs of Orissa had staged a protest at the main gate of the Parliament House Wednesday demanding an IIT in the state and denouncing the apathetic attitude of the HRD ministry.

'We will continue our fight against the step motherly attitude of the central government towards Orissa,' state BJP MP Jual Oram told IANS.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has described the central government's rejection of setting up an IIT in Orissa as 'unfortunate' and said BJD-BJP combine will take the issue to the streets.

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