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Blame it on poor lobbying for IIT loss

Thursday May 10 2007 14:17 IST

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BHUBANESWAR: Even as the BJD-BJP MPs staged a dharna in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday protesting Centre's rejection of Orissa's demand for establishment of a new Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), lack of hard lobbying by the State seems to have been its undoing.

If sources in the HRD Ministry are to be believed the State Government failed to press hard enough for the prestigious institute which ultimately went to Andhra Pradesh.

Apart from writing a few letters to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and HRD Minister Arjun Singh on the issue, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik did little else.

Neither Patnaik nor his Cabinet colleagues urged the matter as aggressively as other States, the sources said.

Not a single letter of the Chief Minister or the Industries Department requesting for establishment of an IIT in the State has ever been referred to the department of the Ministry concerned.

No State Government

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representative had ever inquired on the developments on the front. The case is exactly opposite with other States.

Not only officers but also Ministers of other states were frequently visiting the Ministry to lobby for their region. Their approach was business-like. This is the second instance in which the UPA Government has ignored the State's interest.

The first one being the Indian Institute of Science which was relocated to West Bengal.

Although the Board of Directors of IIT, Kharagpur has approved for its extension centre here, the proposal is hanging fire in the HRD Ministry because of the proposed capacity expansion of IITs and IIMs to accommodate OBC students.

This despite the fact that the State Government has already announced 300 acres of free land for the institution.

Accusing the UPA Government of double standards, the Chief Minister told mediapersons that the Centre has done great injustice to the State by ignoring its rightful demand.

He will continue to pressurise the Centre for establishment of an IIT and IIM in the State, he added.

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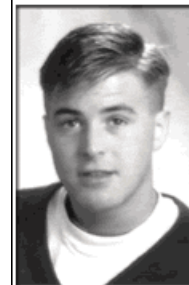
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