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- ◆ Interviews
- ◆ Books
- ◆ Explore Orissa
- ◆ Orissa fact file
- ◆ Oriya Almanac
- ◆ Rath Yatra-2007
- ◆ Festivals in Orissa
- ◆ Hotels in Orissa
- ◆ Hospitals in Orissa
- ◆ Careers in Orissa
- ◆ Readers' Mail

## Orissa CM writes to Centre for IIT in the State

KalingaTimes Correspondent

Bhubaneswar: Taking up the demand for the setting up of an Indian Institute of Technology in Orissa, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has written a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

In a letter dispatched to the Prime Minister on Thursday, Patnaik urged the Centre to ensure setting up of an IIT in the State during the 11th Five Year Plan.

"The recent reply of Union minister of state for human resource development on the floor of the Parliament regarding establishment of IITs in the country has come as a shock to us," Patnaik said in the letter.

Patnaik pointed out that Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development M M Fatmi had announced in Patna on August 28 last year that Orissa was included in the proposal for three green field IITs in the 11th Five Year Plan.

"It is indeed painful that this has been reversed by the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development for reasons not known to others," Patnaik said.

He further mentioned that there was a proposal to open a branch of IIT, Kharagpur, in Bhubaneswar for which the State government had promised a land of nearly 300 acres. It appears that even this proposal has been turned down, he added.

The recent decision of Government of India to locate the IITs in states which already had got the benefit of many Central institutes indicated that objective criteria had not been followed in deciding the locations of the three IITs, Patnaik argued.

The IIT issue came to the fore earlier this week when Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development D Purandeshwari said in Parliament that the Centre had no plan to set up an IIT in Orissa.

The MPs belonging to the Biju Janata Dal and Bharatiya Janata Party MPs from the State had staged a walkout in protest against the Minister's reply to a calling attention motion.

The MPs had also staged a dharna near the statue of Mahatma Gandhi inside the Parliament premises to highlight the demand for an IIT in the State.

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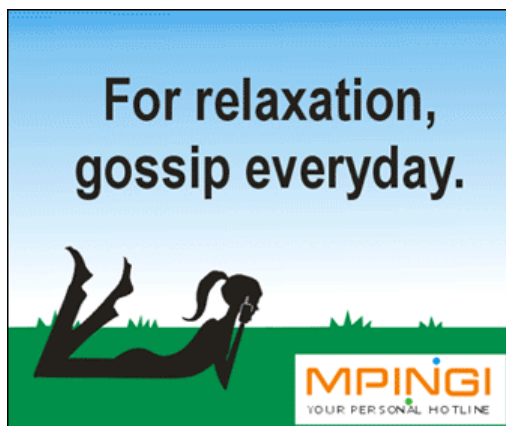
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Editor: Sulochana Das