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8TH DAY



## [Orissa Plus]

### Naveen's power fund plea in Delhi

Statesman News Service

BHUBANESWAR, May 14: Chief minister Mr Naveen Patnaik today urged upon Union power minister Mr Sushil Kumar Shinde to expedite sanction of funds and projects for the state under the Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Viduyutikaran Yojana while drawing attention of the low and slow disposal by the Centre.

Mr Patnaik, who met with Mr Shinde in New Delhi, pointed out that detailed project reports for all 30 districts of the state had been sent to the Centre. Only eight districts were accorded in principle approvals, while funds were released for only two districts, he noted.

Sanction and release have to be expedited to enable the state to get maximum benefit from the RGGVY programme which can establish connectivity to households and strengthen the distribution network in rural areas, he said.

The chief minister also wanted Mr Shinde to review and relax the revised guidelines issued recently by the Centre stipulating that villages with a population of over 300 would come under the RGGVY programme.

Orissa has several backward and tribal areas where habitation is even less than 300, observed the CM while pleading for relaxation of the norm.

Mr Shinde is said to have informed the CM that the first objective was to cover all villages with a population of 300 plus and subsequently, other areas could be taken up.

The CM also raised the issue of allotment of coal blocks for shell companies floated by state public sector undertakings. There are seven such coal blocks available and three shell companies have been set up by the Orissa Hydro Power Corporation, he said while urging for a favourable response in terms of allotments.

Meanwhile, in the state capital here, energy minister Mr SN Patra upped the anti-Centre ante and said UPA was deliberately neglecting Orissa in all fields. Talking to reporters, Mr Patra claimed that BJD held demonstrations

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today at district headquarters to protest against rejection of Orissa's demand for an IIT.

Mr Patra said the RGGVY was nothing but a renaming of the rural electrification programme undertaken by the NDA government. The UPA said it would provide Rs 15,000 crore for the programme, but it has given only Rs 5000 crore, he charged.

The minister alleged that the state's demand for 12 per cent free power from generating stations set up using coal of the state had been rejected by the Centre. "We were entitled to one-third of the NTPC Kaniha generation for the first 1000 MW and we got it but the same was not extended when another 2000 MW was added in the Kaniha plant," he charged. People of Orissa will not tolerate such apathy and neglect and the BJD will launch a campaign against the Centre, he declared.



### Discussion on this Orissa Plus item

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