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IT minister* *Kalyan resigns as BJP's UP in-charge* *Nandigram issue ro

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Arjun non-committal on Naveen's IIT demand

Subhasis Mohanty | Bhubaneswar

In the wake of a Statewide protest over Centre's decision not to set up an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Orissa, Chief Minister Naveen Patanaik on Tuesday met Union Minister of Human Resource Development Arjun Singh in New Delhi.

However, Singh was noncommittal about lending his weight behind the State's demand. Sources said that Singh also refused to meet journalists who sought to know his stand on the Orissa Government's fresh demand for an IIT.

During their meeting, Patnaik reasoned that Orissa does not have a single institution of national excellence and that the people of the State have a long standing demand for establishment of an IIT. However, Singh assured that the demands put forth by the State would be considered while finalising the proposals of his Ministry for the 11th plan.

Patnaik also put forth a demand for setting up a Central University in the KBK region and an Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in the State. It may be noted that Patnaik has also sent a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh protesting against the Centre's decision not to set up the institute in Orissa.

Patnaik also met Union Minister for Road Transport,Highways and Shipping TR Baalu and impressed upon him the poor conditions of the National Highways in Orissa. Baalu assured the Chief Minister that extra funds would be allocated to take up urgent repair work on National Highways that connects Keonjhar district. Discussions were also held on the proposed Vijayawada-Ranchi road, which would traverse through 11 Maoists infested districts.

In yet another major development, Patnaik met Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Ram Vilas Paswan and urged him to take steps to revive the Fertiliser Corporation of India Limited plant at Talcher in the first phase. Paswan assured Patnaik that the plant would be revived and necessary advertisements in this regard would be issued shortly.

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