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Thursday, 21 June 2007

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Time factor in fulfilling IIT dream

Statesman News Service

BHUBANESWAR, June 20: "Much as I am fond of CM Naveen Patnaik, much as I like him, I have to say that in all the time I spent talking about projects related to Orissa's export potential the only question that he asked was "how is Kamal," remarked Union minister of state for commerce Mr Jayaram Ramesh.

The Central minister's barb at the CM came when he was responding to questions on the alleged neglect of Orissa by the UPA government.

Listing out the various issues/projects he had raised during his meeting with the CM yesterday, Mr Jayaram Ramesh quipped ~ "all that the CM asked me was how is Kamal (Union minister Mr Kamal Nath). He (the CM) is a very busy man running a big state and he was frequently looking at his watch, added Mr Ramesh.

"I have met chief ministers who send e-mails placing their demand, who sit on my head and hammer their demands during discussions with me," he added rubbing home the implicit point that nothing of this sort took place at his meeting with Mr Naveen Patnaik.

Dismissing all talk of UPA government neglecting Orissa, Mr Ramesh said such charges are irresponsible and absurd. Nobody ever conspires to starve a state of funds, he retorted. "I do not want to score political points but what if I ask what were these people doing in all the six years that the NDA was in power. The IIT could have come up in six years time, what were you (the BJD) doing when all that you needed was to take up the file to Mr Vajpayee and he would have signed it," shot back Mr Ramesh.

Repeatedly emphasising that he was one with the demand of the state for institutes of higher education, Mr Ramesh said at the same time, one should realise that an IIT will solve the problem of unemployment. Has Kanpur IIT contributed in any way to Kanpur? In fact, IITs have contributed more to the US economy than Indian economy, he remarked.

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Reeling out figures of how Orissa had got the maximum assistance from the UPA government, Mr Ramesh said it is the only state in the country which is fully covered under the NREGA and Backward Region Grant put together. Be it the National rural health mission or any other Central programme, Orissa and other backward states have been accorded priority, he stated.

Discussion on this Orissa Plus item

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The advertisement features a woman in a red shirt on the left. To her right are two circular logos: one for 'THE LINGA BOOK OF RECORDS' and another for 'Bharat Matrimony.com No.1 Indian Matrimony'. Below the logos, the text reads: 'Imagine, a life long love story could begin with a click.' At the bottom right, there is a purple button that says 'Register Free'.