

Saturday, March 01, 2008

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No special package, IIT for Orissa

Pioneer News Service | Bhubaneswar

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday termed the Union Budget as disappointing for Orissa. "There is no special package for Orissa. We expected a special package to bridge the regional imbalances. But no such announcement was made," he said.

Launching a scathing attack on the Centre for neglecting the cause of Orissa, Patnaik said IIT seems to have done with political consideration. "There has been no scheme for the welfare of the tribal people," he said. Orissa had earlier demanded an IIT for the State and the Chief Minister wrote a number of letters to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Union Human Resources Development Minister Arjun Singh. But without conceding to the demands of the Orissa Government, the Centre announced setting up of IITs in Bihar, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.

However, former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition JB Patnaik termed the Budget as the best Budget that has ever presented by any Finance Minister. "A slew of measures have been taken to solve the problems of the farmers," he said, adding that the Congress's concern for the farmers was reflected in the Budget.

Not agreeing to the views of Opposition leader Patnaik's view, Finance Minister Prafulla Chandra Ghadai said no steps had been taken to arrest price rise and inflation. While a certain amount has been sanctioned for the North-East States, no special package was announced for Orissa. "There has been no budgetary provision for Backward Grant Fund. Similarly no steps have been taken to take up developmental works in the Maoist affected region," he said.

Industry Minister BB Harichandan said this Budget was made keeping elections in mind. The Union Government has adopted a stepmotherly attitude towards the State while announcing setting up a number of IITs. "More budgetary provision should have been made to take up road works," he said.

Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Jaydev Jena said such a Budget was never presented during the last 60 years. "The way the Finance Minister has allocated Rs 16,000 crore to take up anti-poverty programme is a welcome step," he said, adding that praise should be heaped on Finance Minister for raising the income tax slab. "The Budget has provisions for senior citizens, farmers and for all strata of society," he said.

Eminent economist and former MP Trilochan Kanungo said Chidambaram's Budget speech has sent a message that elections are round the corner. The UPA Government has promised El Dorado to woo the electorate. "The higher income States would garner more benefit at the cost of the backward States like Orissa and Bihar," he said.

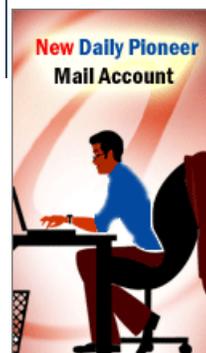
"Had the Government pursued the right kind of farmer's friendly policy consistently in the past, such a huge loan waiver would not have been resorted to," he said, adding that would only increase the regional imbalances.

BJP MP Dharmendra Pradhan said the Budget had ignored the State's interests. He further said the Finance Minister by not conceding to Orissa and mineral rich States demand for fixation of royalty of mineral resources on ad valorem basis, had ignored the financial interest of the States.

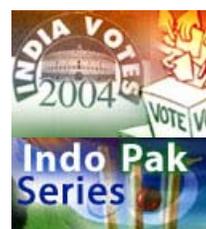
BJP State unit president Suresh Pujari also criticised the Budget. "While the farmers have been waived a loan to the tune of Rs 60,000 cr, the industrialists have been provided a concession of Rs 3 lakh crore," said State Secretary of CPI, Dibakar Nayak. RJP State unit Secretary Sanatan Behera welcomed the Budget. "The suicide of farmers can be checked to a greater extent," he said.

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