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Mixed response to green budget

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Bhubaneswar, Feb. 29: The 2008-09 Union budget has evoked a mixed response in Orissa.

While peasant organisations, with Congress and allies, welcomed the loan waiver for small and marginal farmers, the BJD-BJP described the budget as “disappointing”.

President of Orissa Krushak Mahasangh Bibhudendra Pratap Das called the loan waiver a “welcome step”. “It will help halt the suicide spree in Orissa, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh,” he said.

Homemakers also welcomed the budget. As Minati Mohapatra said: “It’s a good budget for us. Jewellery and goods such as refrigerators and washing machines would get cheaper.” Radhanath Mishra, a government officer, believed that the salaried class would ultimately benefit.

Chief minister Naveen Patnaik, on the other hand, described the budget as “disappointing” for a backward state like Orissa.

“Orissa has been neglected once again. Our demand for a special economic package and special funds for tribals has been ignored,” he lamented.

Alleging that the sanction of an IIT was made on political considerations, Orissa’s “genuine” demand was ignored.

“There should be specific allocation for poorer states like Orissa as was done for the Northeast,” rued finance minister Prafulla Chandra Ghadei, adding that the Backward Region Growth Fund was “ignored”.

Similarly, no funds were provided to tackle Maoist menace in Orissa or elsewhere, he rued.

Industries minister and senior BJP leader B.B. Harichandan said that neglect towards Orissa was reflected in the budget.

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