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'Orissa has been neglected'

Monday, March 03, 2008 03:18 IST



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BHUBANESHWAR: Though the Congress and other opposition parties in Orissa hailed the union budget as people-friendly, the BJD-BJP coalition government has come down heavily on the UPA government for neglecting the cause of Orissa.

Terming the budget as disappointing, particularly for Orissa, chief minister Naveen Patnaik said: "We expected a special package to bridge regional imbalances. But no such announcement was made. While other states managed to get a bonanza, there is no special package announced for Orissa." **He added that the venues for new IITs have been decided after keeping political considerations in mind.**

Finance minister P Chidambaram announced that IITs will be set up in Bihar, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, even though Orissa had demanded an IIT.

Terming the budget as a historic one, former chief minister and opposition leader JB Patnaik said a number of measures have

been taken to give relief to small and marginal farmers. He added it should be considered as the Congress's gift to the community. He further said that the budget catered to all strata of society.

However, Orissa's finance minister Prafulla Chandra Ghadai said, "A political colour was given to the budget." He added that a step-motherly attitude was shown towards the state. Describing the budget as growth oriented, Nationalist Congress Party state unit president Bijoy Mohapatra said Chidambaram had taken a bold step by declaring a waiver of Rs60,000 crores.

"Had the government pursued the right kind of farmer-friendly policy consistently in the past, such huge loan waivers would not have been needed," eminent economist and former MP Trilochan Kanungo said, adding that it would only increase regional imbalances.

BJP state unit president Suresh Pujari said the budget clearly reflected the Congress's attempt to woo the electorate.

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