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Naveen shoots off letter to PM on IIT issue

Pioneer News Service | Bhubaneswar

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday shot off a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh demanding that steps should be taken to set up an IIT in the State as soon as possible.

In his letter, Patnaik stated that Orissa has been deprived of getting an IIT in 2008-09 financial years. Even, Orissa's dream to get an IIT during the 11th Five-Year Plan is not going to materialise. When the other two States like Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal have reputed educational institutions of national level, they have been able to get IITs.

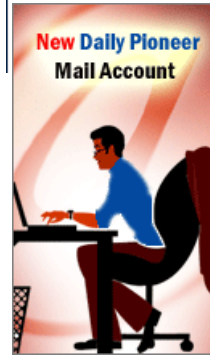
Patnaik further stated that even after the 60 years of independence, Orissa had not been able to get an educational institution of national repute. While the Centre aims to give opportunity to at least 15 per cent students to avail higher education, only 6.1 per cent students have been able get an opportunity to avail higher education. "If the Government of India wants equal development through out India, Centre should set up an IIT in Orissa," Patnaik stated in his letter, adding that such as institute is required as it would able to produce required human resources to meet the needs of the rapid indistrilisation of the State.

The issue also rocked the State Legislative Assembly on Thursday. Ruling party members raised this issue. During Zero Hour, BJD member Saroj Padhi urged the Chair to allow discussion on a special mention relating to the establishment of IIT. Chief Whip of the Government Kishore Mohanty also raised this issue and alleged that Centre has neglected the cause of the Orissa despite Orissa Government's repeated plea to set up an IIT in the State.

However, Opposition members demanded that House should take up the on going agitation by lawyers of the Western Orissa into discussion. As heated exchanged continued between the ruling and opposition members, Speaker adjourned the House twice.

Demanding for an IIT, BJD and BJP members sat on a dharna in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue in the premises of the Assembly. They also displayed the placards showing the Centre's negligence to the cause of Orissa.

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