

Patnaik writes to PM, wants IIT in Orissa

Orissa Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has written to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh demanding that a greenfield Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) be set up in Orissa during the 11th Five Year Plan.

The move for setting up the premier institute was initiated during the National Democratic Alliance government. Minister of State for Human Resource Development M.M. Fatmi had announced in [Patna](#) last year that Orissa had been included in the proposed three greenfield IITs in the 11th plan.

But on Wednesday, Minister of State for Human Resources D. Purandeshwari told parliament that the government had no IIT plans for Orissa.

'It is indeed painful that the decision has now been reversed,' Patnaik said in his letter to the prime minister late Thursday.

It appears the proposal to open a branch of IIT, Kharagpur, at Bhubaneswar, for which the state government had promised 300 acres of land, has also been turned down, the chief minister added.

Over 300 activists of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) staged demonstrations in front of the governor's residence here Thursday over Orissa not getting an IIT. Hundreds of students and political activists also joined in the protests.

Students of Rupalli Vidyapitha, a residential school in the city, launched a signature campaign to press for the establishment of the premier educational institute.

Orissa does not have any institute of national repute like the IIT or the Indian Institute of Management (IIM). The government did not keep its promise of setting up an IIT here, said BJP leader Samir Mohanty.

Members of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and BJP had staged a demonstration outside the parliament after the Centre made clear that there was no proposal for an IIT in Orissa.

'We will continue our fight against the step-motherly attitude of the central government towards Orissa,' BJP MP Jual Oram told IANS.

India currently has seven IITs located at Kharagpur, Mumbai, Chennai, Kanpur, Delhi, Guwahati, and Roorkee.

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