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calcutta, india

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## Science institute stay

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**Bhubaneswar, Nov. 8:** Orissa High Court today stayed the Congress-led central government's decision to shift the proposed national institute of science from Bhubaneswar to Calcutta.

"We direct stay on shifting of the NIS from Bhubaneswar to any other place in the eastern region," the high court said in a directive that came in response to a public interest litigation filed by Prasanta Kumar Das of the State Public Interest Protection Council.

In August 29 PIL, Das alleged it was a conspiracy by Left parties to snatch a national institute from the Orissa capital.

The court also sent a notice to the University Grants Commission and adjourned hearing on the matter for a month.

In December 2003, BJP leader and then human resource development minister M.M. Joshi had announced that four national institutes of science will be set up in Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Pune and Allahabad. The Orissa government, led by BJP ally Biju Janata Dal, promised 75 acres for the proposed institute.

But on September 28 this year, the Prime Minister announced that two Indian Institutes of Science will be set up in Pune and Calcutta.

In his petition, Das said the Left, a crucial ally of the UPA government at the Centre, had conspired to shift the proposed institute from Bhubaneswar. "The UPA government's decision was motivated as the communists want the institute in Calcutta in view of the Assembly elections in West Bengal next year," he said.

Chief minister Naveen Patnaik also wrote to the Centre expressing his displeasure.

Non-resident Oriyas and those living outside the state have also been running a campaign demanding a national institute of science in Bhubaneswar. The campaigners say Orissa neither has a central university nor an institute of national repute like the IITs or IIMs.

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