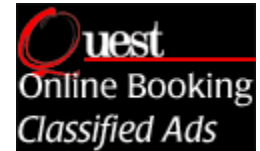




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### [Orissa Plus]

## Bengal's NIS offer

Statesman News Service

KENDRAPARA, Dec. 11. — The West Bengal government would extend all support to Orissa on the National Institute of Sciences (NIS) issue and Left Front MPs may take it up with the Prime Minister's Office, the West Bengal minister, Mr Suryakanta Misra, declared here today.

Talking to The Statesman, the minister, however, refused to delve further into the controversy over the alleged shifting of the proposed NIS project from Bhubaneswar to Kolkata. He refuted the charge that the UPA government was being forced to shift the project to Kolkata under pressure from the Left parties.

Since the matter is sub-judice with a PIL pending before the Orissa High Court it's not prudent to comment on the controversy, Mr Misra, who was here to attend the two-day state level conference of farmers, said.

As the country's eastern region lags behind in the sphere of science and technology development, why can such institutes be not established both at Bhubaneswar and Kolkata, he asked before adding that If required, the Left Front MPs would take up Orissa's interest with the PMO. Mr Misra also felt that the government in Orissa should introduce Bengali as medium of instruction in primary schools located in specific coastal pockets where a sizeable number of Bengali-speaking people are residing.

"I was informed that more than one lakh Bengali-speaking people reside in the seaside villages of Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur districts. In a number of villages they outnumber the natives also. But there is not a single government-run school having Bengali as the medium of instruction in those areas.

"In Kolkata, our government has set up a number of schools with Oriya as a medium of teaching to benefit the people from the neighbouring state. The Orissa government should



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reciprocate the gesture in this regard,” he said.

It may be noted that the alleged shifting of the proposed NIS project had created a stir in Orissa. The Central government has, however, maintained that four NIS projects proposed during the NDA regime had been rejected by the Law Ministry. Subsequently, a fresh proposal for two institutes of scientific research had been proposed and one of which is to be located at Kolkata. The students and NGOs took up the issue and as it gained momentum the ruling BJD-BJP joined the protests, although belatedly. The Assembly has also formed a committee to take it up with the Centre.

#### **Discussion on this Orissa Plus item**

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**No discussions on this item**

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