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## Orissa MPs stall house over science institute

New Delhi | November 30, 2005 5:15:12 PM IST

MPs from Orissa created a furore in the Lok Sabha Wednesday staging noisy protests against the Congress-led central government over the alleged decision to move a proposed science institute at Bhubaneswar to Kolkata.

Declaring that the central government was "neglecting" Orissa, parliamentarians from the Biju Janata Dal (BJP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) demanded an assurance that the National Institute of Science (NIS) would be set up in Bhubaneswar.

They said the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) had taken a political decision to "shift" the proposed NIS from the Orissa capital to the West Bengal capital.

Consequently, house proceedings were stalled for 20 minutes as the MPs even staged a sit-in near the speaker's chair.

The pandemonium that followed forced Speaker Somnath Chatterjee to adjourn the house 10 minutes before the lunch recess.

Raising the issue during zero hour, BJD leader in the Lok Sabha Braja Kishore Tripathy said the UPA government had deliberately shifted the NIS, which had been granted by the previous BJP-led government at Bhubaneswar in 2003.

He said the state government had acquired seven acres of land for the institute. "It was the first and only national institute allocated for Orissa. The Congress governments since independence have been neglecting us despite our great contribution to the freedom struggle and nation building."

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"And now our peaceful state is in turmoil because of this."

An emotional Tripathy went to the extent of warning the central government that Orissa could put the entire nation into darkness if it so decided as the state supplies a major portion of power and iron ore.

The speaker asked him not to make any remarks that might affect national unity.

Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) members from West Bengal denied that the institute had been shifted to Kolkata.

"I don't think that what Kolkata is getting is the same one that was granted for Bhubaneswar. We were never against the development of Orissa. We will support them," CPI-M leader Basudeb Acharya said.

When the opposition insisted on a response from the government, Leader of the house Pranab Mukherjee said he would ascertain the facts and inform them about the status of the institute.

He added that he had not been informed about the members' decision to raise the issue.

"You cannot expect the leader of the house to give an instant reply like an instant coffee. I have not been given any notice about your decision to raise this particular issue today," Mukherjee said.

As the members continued to insist for an assurance from the government, Chatterjee adjourned the house.

(IANS)

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