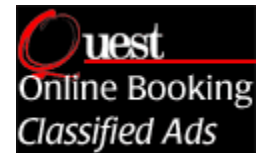




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UGC clarification on NIS sought

Statesman News Service

CUTTACK, Jan. 22. — The focal point of the PIL over the alleged shifting of the proposed National Institute of Science (NIS) from Orissa has moved to the UGC after a month with the High Court seeking clarification from the UGC over its involvement in the proposal within a month.

In December 2005, the PIL had gathered heat when the Orissa State Public Interest Protection Council (OSPIPC), challenged the veracity of the claims made by Mr Prem Kumar, under secretary in the ministry of HRD in an affidavit submitted in the High Court. In November 2005, the controversy had taken a new turn with the Central government claiming before the High Court that no such decision was ever taken by it to set up any such science institution in Bhubaneswar. Mr Prem Kumar in his affidavit had stated that “no policy decision was finalised by the Central government for setting up any science institution at Bhubaneswar.”

But the OSPIPC had pointed out that the UGC had in December 2003 communicated to the vice-chancellor of Utkal University, a decision to establish NIS at four places (Bhubaneswar, Pune, Allahabad and Chennai). This was followed by a letter from a high power committee of the UGC in April 2004 indicating about preparation of a project report on it. The OSPIPC president, Mr Prasant Das, alleged that Mr Kumar had misled the court. The NIS issue had dominated the Assembly session on 23 November. The state higher education minister, Mr Samir Dey, responding to a call attention notice had alleged in the Assembly that the UPA government did not take any follow up step after it came to power in 2004.

It may be noted that in August 2005, the OSPIPC president had filed a PIL seeking judicial intervention against shifting of the proposed NIS from Bhubaneswar to Kolkata. Acting on it, the





Orissa High Court had on 9 November issued an interim order directing the Union government

“to stay the shifting of the proposed science institution from Bhubaneswar to any other part of eastern India”.

Subsequently, Mr Prem Kumar in his affidavit had clarified that the Union Cabinet had in November 2005 decided in favour of creation of two new institutions devoted to science education and research. The Cabinet decision was taken on the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.

Later, the Central government had decided to locate the two IISRE at Pune and Kolkata, the affidavit clarified while seeking grant of leave to set up an Indian Institute for Science Research Education (IISRE) in Kolkata.

Discussion on this Orissa Plus item

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