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[Orissa Plus]

## NDA slammed on NIS

BHUBANESWAR, May 25: Sentiments more than reason and facts run high when the issue of setting up a National Institute of Sciences or regional center of AIIMS in the state crops up.

And today, it was the turn of Union minister Mr Chandra Sekhar Sahu to be barraged with questions on these issues. The questions continued even after Mr Sahu had put the record straight ~ the NDA had made mere announcements without backing it up with firm proposals. The NIS was proposed by the UGC and since it was not the competent authority, the idea was rejected. The regional centre of AIIMS, for which the then Prime Minister Mr AB Vajpayee had laid a foundation stone amidst much fanfare, was virtually non-existent in terms of Cabinet approval and budgetary allocations. Yet a section of people have been trying to rake up sentiments over these issues and send a message as though the UPA government had scrapped these projects.

On the contrary, the UPA government has formalised the regional centre, stated Mr Sahu. He pointed out that MPs cutting across party lines had appealed to the PM for the NIS in Orissa. Mr Sahu also noted that Mr Vajpayee had laid the foundation stone for a oil refinery at Paradip which was pushed to the back burner during the NDA regime. The UPA has not only taken it up but has decided to expand it to a petroleum complex envisaging a massive investment of Rs 47,000 crore he added. nSNS

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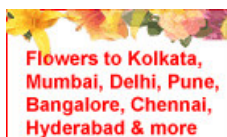
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