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**ORISSA**

**May 26, 2006**

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**Manmohan to re-lay stone for Paradip unit**

Friday May 26 2006 12:19 IST

**BHUBANESWAR:** When a Government changes, projects initiated by its predecessor are either scrapped or completely altered or put on hold.

But the UPA Government seems to be scripting a new course by trying to claim a project of the previous Government as its own.

The proposed petrochem project at Paradip is well on way to setting such a precedent ♦ that of having its foundation stone laid twice over and that too by succeeding prime ministers.

If it was prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee who first laid the foundation stone in May 2000 for the proposed refinery, the UPA Government is at it again.

In a move that smacks of cornering political mileage, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is likely to lay the foundation stone for the project claimed to be an upgraded version.

Announcing this at a media conference here on Thursday, Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment Chandrasekhar Sahu said that Manmohan Singh would lay the stone for the upgraded project in the near future. The estimated cost of the new project would be around Rs 47,000 crore, he said.

Sahu said he had requested the Prime Minister to come to Orissa and lay the foundation stone of the project, which would fulfil the aspirations of the people of the State.

The announcement by the Union Minister has again made the future of the project uncertain. Though the foundation stone for the project was laid six years back, it became jinxed over differences between the State Government and

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the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) over incentives and the signing of MoU also did not help.

Sahu, however, reiterated the commitment of the Centre to set up the oil refinery complex at Paradip. The original project for which Vajpayee had laid the foundation stone was of nine million tonne capacity. It was later upgraded to 15 million tonne by the IOC board.

To a question, Sahu said the controversy over the setting up of Indian institute of Science (IISc) in Bhubaneswar would be put to rest as the Prime Minister and Human Resource Development Minister Arjun Singh had given positive indication to his representation. He ducked a question on the performance of the Naveen Patnaik Government.

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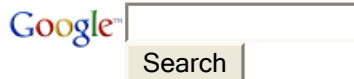
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