



# Orissa awaits gift from dad Manmohan

**SOUMYAJIT Pattnaik**  
Bhubaneswar, August 26

AS ORISSA gets ready to roll out the red carpet for Manmohan Singh on his first visit after becoming Prime Minister on Monday, one family in Bhubaneswar is trying very hard to stay away from the media glare.

Ratnabala Pattnaik's son Ashok Pattnaik, an IPS officer, is married to Manmohan Singh's second daughter Daman Singh. Her husband, late Sachidanda Pattnaik, was in the IAS. The family feels proud the Prime Minister is visiting the state, but is reticent about it.

Ratnabala told the *Hindustan Times*: "I feel good like anyone else,

but I don't want to talk more. But even after becoming PM, he calls me up to enquire about my health."

Two years back when a delegation of political leaders from Orissa met the PM and told him about the neglect of the state, Singh told them half in jest, "How can I neglect Orissa? My daughter is married in that state". A senior Congress leader jocularly responded seeking a special package as "dowry" for the state.

With Singh scheduled to arrive here on Monday, the focus is on the special package that Singh will unveil for Orissa.

According to the tour schedule, the Prime Minister will lay the foundation of a National Institute of Sci-

ence, Education and Research (NISER) at Bhubaneswar, which will come up at an estimated cost of Rs 100 crore. The NISER will be set up by the Department of Atomic Energy and it will take the place of National Institute of Science, earlier planned by the UGC to be located in Bhubaneswar. The NISER's progress was halted midway, triggering protests. The Prime Minister will now revive the project with a new name and under his direct supervision as the Department of Atomic Energy is looked after by him.

The PM will also dedicate to the nation the Talcher Super Thermal Power Station at Kaniha in Angul district, the largest thermal power sta-

tion of the NTPC.

Producing states get 10 per cent of the power at concessional rates from the NTPC. When the project was conceived in 1997, Orissa had surplus power and had declined its 10 per cent share on concession terms.

But now with industrial activity picking up, the government wants its share, though it is not available. Chief minister Naveen Pattnaik will take up the issue with the PM during his visit.

The Prime Minister will also inspect development work in the KBK region —Bolangir and Koraput districts —including the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.



**"How can I neglect Orissa? My daughter is married in that state," the PM had said once**



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