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## PM's visit to Orissa flayed by BJP-BJD alliance

Press Trust of India  
 Bhubaneswar, August 27, 2006

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A day before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Orissa, the ruling BJP-BJD alliance on Sunday said it was 'an attempt to derive political mileage'.

Holding two separate press conferences on Sunday afternoon, BJP national youth president Dharmendra Pradhan and BJD Rajya Sabha member Baijayant Panda said, "Singh should clarify why did Centre reduce funds of Rs 120 crore from the Rs 250 crore as special assistance for eight districts of Koraput, Bolangir and Kalahandi (KBK) region."

When the state government had been demanding to double the assistance for KBK districts, it was shocking to learn that the Centre had actually cut the volume of assistance by Rs 120 crore, they said.

"The UPA government had been claiming that by keeping 19 districts under Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) scheme, the centre was giving more importance on KBK. It is not correct to keep KBK districts in the same league in which districts of Punjab and Haryana are getting benefits," Pradhan said.

The two leaders also came down heavily on UPA government for 'dumping' the NDA government's initiative to set up a National Institute of Science (NIS).

"National Institute of Science, Education and Research (NISER) is nothing but an upgradation of the Institute of Physics. What I have learnt is that the proposed institute is coming under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). I don't think DAE is adequately equipped to run an institute like NIS," Panda said adding that PM had resorted to only 'window dressing'.

"We have been demanding an institute like NIS. The NIS would have provided bigger administration and brighter prospects," the BJD Rajya Sabha member said.

The two young leaders of the alliance also charged that the state's demand for flood relief was overlooked by the Centre.

"When states like Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra were granted flood relief, why Orissa's demand had not been given due importance," Pradhan said.

Panda alleged that, "though our state submitted central assistance for over Rs 1,000 crore, not a single penny had been sanctioned."

The BJP leader also ridiculed the PM's visit to Talcher for dedicating Talcher Super Thermal Power Station, a unit of NTPC, to the nation.

"Before this visit, three Union Power ministers had dedicated different units to the nation. It is not a new programme. Rather, the Prime Minister should announce a package for 400 displaced persons who had been waiting to get job in the company," Pradhan said.

"The NTPC had not been spending adequate funds for the peripheral developments during the last three years. The region is facing acute pollution due to fly-ash emerging from the power unit. We demand the Prime Minister to declare a time-bound programme to deal with the menace," he said.

Pradhan said a team of state BJP leaders led by party president Jual Oram would submit a memorandum on different problems of the state to Manmohan Singh.

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