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**Orissa may get a 'Pluto' NIS**

Sunday August 27 2006 11:43 IST

**BHUBANESWAR:** The State Government's persistence has paid off, though the reward may belie the high expectations.

Orissa's demand for a National Institute of Science (NIS) has finally been accepted by the Centre, albeit with a 'demoted' status extended to the proposed one, going by the sources here.

The Centre may give a status to the proposed institute a la leading astronomers did with planet Pluto recently. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is scheduled to announce about the Centre's decision during his two-day tour of the State beginning Monday.

Information received by the State Government from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said the proposed institute has been named National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER).

Although it will be fully funded by the Centre, Higher Education Minister Samir Dey told media persons that details will be known only after the Prime Minister's announcement.

However, the Department sources said the institute, on the cards, will be a shred below the status of NIS the Centre is planning to set up in Pune and Kolkata. The NDA government had announced establishment of four NISs, including one in Orissa. However, the succeeding UPA Government relocated the NIS, proposed for Orissa, to Kolkata triggering a Centre Vs Orissa Government duel.

The PMO had recently sought opinion of Dr Anil Kakodkar, Principal Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), about upgradation of the

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City-based Institute of Physics by inducting other science courses in it. The Institute of Physics comes under DAE.

The DAE was reported to have clarified that as the Institute of Physics is a highly-specialised institute, adding other science courses to existing ones would affect research work defeating the very purpose for which it was set up.

Dey said the land, identified for the National Institute of Science at Gothapatna on the outskirts of the City, has been earmarked for the new institute. But, the State Government is not clear about the size of the institute and the quantum of land required.

Allaying apprehensions that there is no suitable land for the proposed institute, he clarified that the Government had allocated 70 acres of land for the NIS against a requirement of 50 acres.



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