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Snooker****

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Orissa awaits PM with demand for Special Category Status

Subhasis Mohanty | Bhubaneswar

The political atmosphere is charged up in the State on the wake of Prime Minister's proposed two-day visit to the State on Monday. The State Government is ready with a memorandum and the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will present it to Dr Monmohan Singh on Monday at Raj Bhawan.

Sources said the State Government would urge the Centre to accord Special State Category status to the State. This has been the long outstanding demand of the Orissa Government. The State Government would also rake up the KBK issue with the Prime Minister. The State Government would demand a special assistance of Rs 500 crore for the State and urge the Government to continue with the Special KBK scheme and not disrupt the programme at any cost. The Rs 500 crore should come as a special grant and not be included under the Backward Region Development Fund (BRDF), State Government would categorically tell the Prime Minister.

To expand the education in tribal-dominated KBK areas, the State would urge the Centre to set up a Central University in KBK area. Like the North-Eastern States, the Centre should give an incentive for the development of industries in KBK areas and announce a special tax relief for the industries.

To curb the menace of the Maoist movement, the State wants infrastructure development in the Maoist affected areas. The Centre should bear all the expenditure for the proposed construction of the Vijayawada and Ranchi National High way, the State would demand to the Centre.

The State would urge the Centre that proposed National Institute of Science and Research Centre should be given the same status like that of Pune and Kolkata.

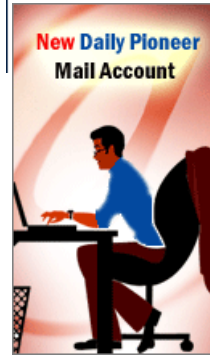
Sources said the State would demand a 10 per cent share of power produced from the National Super Thermal Power Corporation at Kaniha and allow the State Government to impose a special tax on the power produced by the thermal power centre. It would also demand a setting up of a special environment protection fund to fight the menace of pollution which would be generated by the thermal power centre. For this the Centre should give a six paise grant for each unit of power produced by the thermal power station.

The State Government would reiterate its demand to enhance the coal royalty and 20 per cent of the price of the coal should be given as royalty.

Sources further added that the Government would take up the problems of the flood affected districts with the Prime Minister and demand an assistance of Rs 1131.83 crore as special flood assistance package.

It would also demand a Rs 856 core to take up the drainage work in the water logged areas. The State would also take up the farmers interest with the Prime Minister and it would demand that the Centre should waive interest toward the loan given by the Cooperative samitees.

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