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[[Orissa Plus](#)]

## News

[Page one](#)

[India](#)

[World](#)

[Editorial](#)

[Perspective](#)

[Business](#)

[Sport](#)

[Bengal](#)

## Magazine

[Sports &](#)

[Leisure](#)

[Career &](#)

[Campus](#)

[Science &](#)

[Technology](#)

[Voices](#)

[Lifestyle](#)

[Unplugged](#)

[Kolkata Plus](#)

[Bengal Plus](#)

[Viewpoint](#)

[North East Page](#)

[Orissa Plus](#)

[Note Book](#)

[N.B & Sikkim](#)

[Plus](#)

[Entertainment](#)

[NB Extra](#)

[World Focus](#)



## PM's NIS offer silences critics

Statesman News Service

BHUBANESWAR, Aug. 28: In a fitting counter to all speculations and fears expressed by many, particularly the ruling BJD-BJP quarters here, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh today not only announced the establishment of a National Institute of Science Education and Research in Bhubaneswar but went on to emphasis that it would be a world class institution on a par with the Indian Institute of Science, if not better than that.

It will become a Mecca for science just as TIFR and IISc are today, he declared.

He stated that the proposed institute would be under the Atomic Energy Department and would facilitate the synergy between research and higher education. The NISER will take up five-year masters courses and include an integrated M.Sc-Ph. D. also. It will have world class experimental facilities in all current and emerging branches of science and DAE will provide enough resources.

The PM said the project would be completed in two phases ~ the first courses will be started in three or four subjects such as Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry and Biology with existing faculty and new faculty. In the second phase, 200 acres of land will be acquired and activities expanded.

Admitting that expenditure on Science & Technology has been low, the PM said the government had increased R&D allocations by 20 percent last year. "We shall strive to reach the target of 2 per cent of our GDP in the 11th Plan," he added.

There had been a hue and cry in the state over the alleged shifting of a proposed National Institute of Science from Bhubaneswar to Kolkata. The Agami Orissa, a civil society organisation, had led the movement demanding an NIS in Orissa. Political parties had joined the demand and of late, the ruling BJD-BJP combine had lambasted the UPA for ignoring the demand.

Even yesterday, the ruling BJD-BJP had cast doubts over the promised announcement of the PM and undermined it by saying it was nowhere on lines of the NIS or IISc. They had alleged that the PM was planning for a mere expansion of the existing Institute of Physics.



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Today, Agami Orissa was the only one amongst those who had voiced the demand to come forward by thanking the PM for his announcement in engaging world champion sand artist Suadarsan Patnaik to pay tribute to the PM.

Senior Congress leaders as well as those belonging to other Opposition parties like the OGP and Left today met the PM separately and submitted memoranda. It is learnt that the OGP and Left combine had demanded publication of a White Paper on the KBK funds utilisation and a probe into the IAY scam in Orissa.

#### **Discussion on this Orissa Plus item**

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