

Ganjam site for sea study

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Bhubaneswar, Feb. 12: The IIT here will develop the country's first coastal observatory in Ganjam district.

Chief minister Naveen Patnaik today announced the project while speaking at the foundation day ceremony of IIT-Bhubaneswar.

"I am happy to share with all of you that the state government has taken up the initiative to allot 75 acres in Ganjam for establishment of the Bay of Bengal Coastal Observatory. This observatory will help the people of the state get advance information about natural calamities, such as tsunami and cyclones."

The proposed observatory was supposed to come up on 35 acres at Sipasarubali in Puri. The sea-facing site was selected after careful consideration as it was conveniently located for the study of waves and sea. The site also had facilities for parking of boats that would be used during research activities. But, the authorities were forced to look for an alternative place because of land acquisition-related complica-



Chief minister Naveen Patnaik presents an award to a student during the foundation day celebrations of IIT-Bhubaneswar on Friday. Picture by Sanjib Mukherjee

tions in Puri.

"There has been inordinate delay in getting the land in Puri. So, we sought 75 acres of sea-facing land in Gopalpur," said a senior official of IIT-Bhubaneswar.

In August last year, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the ministry of earth science and the IIT for the Rs 140-crore observatory. The ministry has already approved a grant of Rs 9.23 crore for the project. How-

ever, construction has not yet started for the project because of the delay in getting the land.

The proposed observatory will be able to predict tropical cyclone, rise in sea level and extreme weather events, apart from monsoon variability, regional climate variability and other extreme conditions. Such a centre assumes significance especially because the state is prone to natural calamities. Apart from observ-

ing, analysing and disseminating geo-physical data about the ocean, the centre aims to generate highly-skilled and competent human resources for research in the fields of earth system sciences and climate change.

Naveen also spoke about how the state government was looking forward to collaborate with the IIT for its smart city plan. "We expect a lot of involvement and contribution from the institute in research and development on traffic management, waste management, sanitation, security and surveillance," he said.

Naveen also hoped that the IIT and the proposed National Institute of New Energy and Innovations would work together to build a new culture of zero-energy campus.

IIT director R.V. Raja Kumar thanked the state administration for its support and guidance. On the occasion, several awards were presented to faculty members and students of the institute. Satyanarayan Panigrahi was adjudged the best teacher of the institute based on feedback from students.