

Nandigram effect: Orissa scraps SEZ

Sandeep Mishra, TNN Mar 30, 2007, 12.38am IST

BHUBANESWAR: The West Bengal government's decision to scrap the proposed special economic zone (SEZ) at Nandigram has forced the Naveen Patnaik government to "drop" one such proposed tax-free zone in order to avoid any violence over land acquisition, official sources said here on Thursday.

The state government will be scrap one SEZ proposed by the Orissa Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (Idco) at Kalinga Nagar. The state-owned Idco had proposed to establish "a sector specific metallurgical-based engineering and downstream industry" (stainless steel) over 250 acre at Kalinga Nagar Industrial Complex.

The Centre had also given "in principle" approval to it, industries minister B B Harichandan informed the Assembly through a written reply to a query. "It has been decided to drop this project for the time being," he stated.

Sources said decision not to go ahead with the SEZ was taken as Jindal Stainless Steel proposed a similar SEZ over 1,102 acre in Kalinga Nagar and got the Centre's nod.

"The Jindal group requires additional land. The state government has decided to transfer the land with Idco to the company. So, Idco no longer has the requisite land for the proposed SEZ. Moreover, the government did not feel it necessary to have two SEZs of similar nature in the same area," reasoned a senior official.

Though the state government does not want to express its apprehensions over the SEZ issue, ruling BJD-BJP alliance insiders admitted that the administration does not want to have a repeat of the Kalinga Nagar bloodspill. The state government has so far received proposals for setting up 17 SEZs.

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