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BJD youth wing seeks job for locals at Kalinganagar steel plants

TNN May 11, 2012, 09:30AM IST

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KENDRAPADA: At least 4,000 displaced and educated youths, including many girls, under the banner of youth wing of [Biju Janata Dal](#) organized a protest meeting at Sukinda on Thursday, demanding permanent jobs with proper salary in the 12 steel companies and other organizations in Kalinganagar and neighbouring areas in Jajpur district

Addressing the meeting, finance minister Prafulla Ghadei, who is also the local MLA of Sukinda, said, "Many steel companies acquired lands in Sukinda with the promise to provide jobs to locals. But many companies are not considering our demands now, due to which the youth wing of the BJD organized this protest meeting at Sukinda."

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"Many land losers are also yet to receive the compensation amount. We are demanding priority for locals in employment and reservation of various technical posts in all the 12 steel plants. Our agitation will continue until our demand is fulfilled," Ghadei added.

The minister accused steel plant authorities of adopting anti-local policies, in violation of decisions of the Rehabilitation and Peripheral Development Advisory Committee.

Pratap Patnaik, president of the youth wing of BJD in Sukinda, alleged that the companies at Kalinganagar are giving priority to outsiders and non-Odias in jobs, depriving the local youths who have the requisite degrees and diplomas in various streams. Many contract labourers, who are engaged in construction works of the companies, have been neglected by the companies as well, he said.

[The outfit](#) submitted a 13-point charter of demands to the companies, including payment of

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higher wages, proper maintenance of records pertaining to gratuity and employees provident fund (EPF) accounts, providing drinking water to neighbouring villages, opening hospitals in the villages, planting trees to check pollution, spending 10% of their profits for peripheral development works, etc.

"Rampant industrialization and the unregulated use of water by the industries are the main reason behind river pollution and water shortage in the many villages and towns near Bamahani and Kharosotra rivers in Jajpur district," said BJD leader Maheswar Guru.

He also attracted attention towards chromites mine workers of Sukinda and neighbouring areas, who are constantly exposed to contaminated dust and water. Gastrointestinal bleeding, tuberculosis and asthma are common ailments among such people. Infertility, birth defects, and stillbirths and have also been rampant in the area, Guru added.

The Blacksmith Institute, a US-based organization had included Sukinda Valley in the worst polluted places list among 10 places in the globe five years ago, the BJD leader pointed out.

The meeting was also addressed by BJD leaders Biswajit Raj, Biswajit Das and others. Security was tightened at the meeting place and Kalinganagar on Thursday to check any untoward incident.

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