

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik dedicates Birla Gandhi Peace Centre to people

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Bhubaneswar: Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the Gandhi Peace Centre instituted by Aditya Birla Group, here on Saturday.

Applauding the Aditya Birla Group for this noble initiative, Patnaik said that on the 150th year of the Mahatma, the dedication of this Gandhi Peace Centre assumes monumental significance. He said, "At the heart of the idea of non-violence, remain dialogue, reconciliation, accommodation and understanding." "These values pave the way for peaceful resolution of many intractable issues of our collective life and I am sure that this Centre will provide an institutionalized platform to awaken consciousness about the life and works of Gandhiji and educate the people to realize the deeper significance of his ideals," he added.

"This being the 150th, Birth Anniversary of the Mahatma, the Aditya Birla Group felt that a fitting tribute, to the Mahatma would be, to set-up technological marvels, that would like a prism refract, the epic life of the Mahatma."



The chairperson, AdityaBirla Centre for Community Initiatives and Rural Development, Rajashree Birla, said, "To set-up insightful galleries, in different parts of India, where Gandhiji's imprint, is more than discernable would, we felt, be an act of deep homage. Odisha, was the right choice for the initiative". She added that Naveen Patnaik epitomized Gandhian values and that the Mahatma felt a kind of spiritual connect, with Odisha. It was the place, that he visited eight times. His tryst with Odisha, began in 1921, as part of his nationwide journey, to spread his ideals of Satyagraha, Swaraj and Ahimsa. It became intense, when he saw the frugal, precarious living conditions of the poverty struck, the ill treatment of the Harijans, and the huge unemployment.

Birla said, " In Odisha, Gandhiji set a splendid example, of egalitarianism and self-reliance. Naveen Patnaik, has taken Odisha, to the next level, changing the course of life of the marginalized, and truly living the Gandhian dream". She added, "The Gandhi Peace Centre, aims to bring to the people of Odisha, glimpses of the epic life, of the Mahatma, through cutting edge technology. Bearing in mind, that as decades move on with the times, the relevance of great personalities, of the past, and their contributions fade."

"We live in a world of technology, and the youth, seem forever in its grip, and grasp. To take the timeless message, of the Mahatma, we have resorted to, world-class futuristic technology. Through innovatively blending, the Gandhian ethos, we have evolved, an interactive process. In the multimedia presentation, at this Peace Centre, everyone in Odisha can engage, in a fascinating dialogue, on the life and time of the Mahatma.

"Incidentally, this Gandhi Peace Centre, is the fourth of its kind. In fact, the conceptualization, of the first Eternal Gandhi Multimedia Museum, was done by Kumar Mangalam, an ardent follower of the Mahatma and the Aditya Birla Group, chairman. This is in Delhi at Birla House. The three other Gandhi Centres -Birmingham in UK, the up and coming one in Houston in US, and this Centre in Odisha are replicas. Besides these monumental structures, the Group has set-up miniature centres, at the major airports, with the most appealing Gandhi artefacts.

Birla's touching statement in her words, "In my heart, I feel very strongly, that if any state and its people in India, have to keep the spirit of Gandhiji alive, and carry the baton forward, it will be Odisha and Odias".

Birla expressed deep gratitude, to Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik for his unflinching support. She also acknowledged the contribution of Ashok Chandra Panda, the erstwhile culture minister, in initiating this project, and for his outstanding support in translating this idea into a reality.

From the Aditya Birla Group, Sanjiv Misra and Ashok Bal, helped in taking the project forward. Alongside Bharat Parekh, the Project Head, Birad Yagnik, the curator and Sandeep Karkhanis, the architect, have been responsible for this marvelous execution of the Gandhi Peace Centre.

The Gandhi Peace Centre is located in proximity to the historical Khandagiri and Udaigiri Caves. Spanning 20,000 sq. ft., it's an interactive digital wonder in Odia, Hindi and English.

Among others science & technology minister, Ashok Panda, and tourism minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi were present in the ceremony.