

HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS UPDATE

By Civil Society Forum on Human Rights (CSFHR), Odisha

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Villagers protest work at Posco site

MANOJ KAR



People from Posco project area demonstrate in front of Erasama tehsil office. Telegraph picture

Paradip, Jan. 13: Villagers, who have lost their betel vineyards and land to the Posco steel project, today resorted to agitation, protesting against non-implementation of rehabilitation and resettlement measures. Over 1,000 villagers living in the proposed project area demonstrated in front of the Erasama tehsil office in Jagatsinghpur district and stepped up demand for suspension of project-related civil construction. "On numerous occasions, the state government had committed to fulfil our demands. But they have failed to keep it. On the other hand, the officials have acted in favour of the steel company by allowing it to erect the project boundary wall," said Nirvaya Samantaray, general secretary of United Action Committee, a pro-Posco outfit. "We are not opposed to the project. But we are voicing protest against the anti-people policies. People have been let down both by the steel company and the government agencies," said a protester. "Unless our demands are met, we will continue with the agitation. The committee would intensify the protest, if Posco goes ahead with boundary wall construction," said Jivanlal Behera, a local. "The competent authorities have been apprised of people's grievances. The Rehabilitation and Peripheral Development Authority Committee (RPDAC) is to decide the rehabilitation issue. The government is planning to hold the RPDAC meeting in the first week of February," said Satya Kumar Mallick, Jagatsinghpur collector. "The administration has adhered to its dilly-dallying tactics in fulfilling rehabilitation demands. It has become desperate to resume project work despite people's protest. There ought to be clear-cut rehabilitation and resettlement policy for people losing out on land for the steel project," said Samantaray. The six-point charter of demands include hike in compensation against the acquired betel vineyards, private and homestead land, inclusion of about 75 families who have deserted Dhinkia under the relief scheme, compensation coverage to betel vines demolished in 2008, engagement of local residents in

the project work and employment in the project from every family.

(source-http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140114/jsp/nation/story_17784488.jsp#.UtZuyNIW1gU)

Indian government grants environment clearance to Posco's steel plant



Indian women stand near the stems of trees chopped for the proposed \$12 billion steel plant by South Korean conglomerate Posco at Noliashai in Jagatsinghpur district of Orissa state, India, on July 25, 2011. THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP, Biswaranjan Rout

NEW DELHI - India's environment ministry has cleared South Korean steel giant Posco's planned \$13 billion steel plant in eastern India but has asked the company to spend more on social welfare, an official said Friday. The clearance was given a few days ago and will allow Posco to go ahead with the massive plant in Odisha state, the official said. He was speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media. He did not give further details. The Odisha steel plant would be the largest-ever foreign investment in India. The country has been embroiled in fierce debates over how to protect its environment while lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty through investment and infrastructure. Posco spokesman Jeong Yong-min in Seoul said the Indian government has asked the company to spend 5 per cent of its \$12.6 billion investment in Odisha on social commitments. But Jeong said no agreement has been reached on how much the company would spend on its social projects. The project is expected to produce 13.2 million tons (12 million metric tons) of steel per year. It has been delayed for years following protests about environmental damage and land procurement hassles. The Odisha project requires about 4,000 acres (1,620 hectares) of land for the steel mill as well as an affiliated power plant, railway line, road, water supply infrastructure and port. An Indian environmental panel in 2012 suspended clearances for the plant saying permissions granted earlier were based only on environmental information about the first phase of the project and not the entire project.

(Source-<http://www.courierislander.com/news/indian-government-grants-environment-clearance-to-posco-s-steel-plant-1.784639>)

Vedanta Resources mining proposal in Niyamgiri rejected by Environment Ministry

Environment Ministry today rejected Vedanta Resources' controversial bauxite mining proposal in Odisha's Niyamgiri, official sources said. The sources in the ministry said here that a decision has been taken to reject Vedanta Resources' proposal to mine bauxite in Niyamgiri hills. The Supreme Court had recently stalled Vedanta Group's bauxite mining in Odisha till gram sabhas of Rayagada and Kalahandi districts in the state give clearance to it. The apex court had directed the gram sabhas of the two districts to decide in three months the issues arising out of the mining project, including that of the tribals residing in the area. The ministry had refused the next stage forest clearance to OMC and Sterlite's mining project in Niyamgiri Hills area in Lanjigarh, Kalahandi and Rayagada districts, accepting the Forest Advisory Committee's (FAC) recommendation for withdrawal of the clearance. Efforts of Vedanta Aluminium Limited (VAL) to mine bauxite ore in Niyamgiri hills had received a setback with the 12th palli (gram) sabha also voting against mining there recently.

This is the first time an environmental referendum has been conducted on a directive by the Supreme Court to find out whether mining in Niyamgiri will tantamount to an infringement of the religious, community and individual rights of local forest-dwellers. Niyamgiri hills are considered sacred by the local tribes and others as it is the abode of Niyamraja, their presiding deity.

(Source-<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/vedanta-resources-mining-proposal-in-niyamgiri-rejected-by-environment-ministry/1217748>)

Fishermen oppose Posco's captive port

Thousands of fishermen dependent on the Jatadhari river mouth for their livelihood have opposed the captive port proposed by Posco India at that location.

The aggrieved fishermen have sought the intervention of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), pointing out that the NGT should not give clearance to the steel maker to build a port at Jatadhari.

Nearly 50,000 fishermen of Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara districts depend on the Barunei, Mahanadi and Jatadhari river mouths for fishing to eke out their living. These fishermen are members of Kalinga Karndhar Kaibartya Solabhai Sabha (KKKSS). "Thousands of fishermen are living in a critical condition due to low fish catch at Barunei and Mahanadi river mouths. The situation will worsen if NGT allows Posco to build its captive port at Jatadhari river mouth. The fishermen communities would be deprived of their livelihood and will be forced to migrate to other states to work as bonded labourers", said Pitamber Tarai, spokesperson of KKKSS.

The fishermen have vowed to step up stir if NGT gives the green nod for Posco's captive port. The environment activists have raised concerns on the possible impact of the port on marine life, especially Olive Ridley turtles. Meanwhile, the disgruntled youths of Gadakujang and Nuagaon panchayats kicked off a signature campaign in different Posco affected villages to expose the truth behind the indefinite stir called by the pro-Posco leaders.

Miffed with the activities of the pro-Posco leaders, hundreds of youths led by former panchayat samiti member Saumendra Nayak accused the leaders of misleading the affected villages to serve their own

interests.

"The intention of the pro-Posco leaders of Nuagaon and Gadkujang is not clear. These leaders are intensifying the stir for their own interest to get contract work from Posco by organizing the affected people. They have duped the innocent villagers including women to sit on dharna to fulfill their demands but this agitation is only to mislead the affected villagers", Nayak said. Nayak is monitoring the boundary wall construction of the Posco project on behalf of S S Constructions.

The youths have planned to collect the signatures of nearly 1500 people of Nuagaon and Gadakujang panchayats and submit the same to the Jagatsinghpur administration.

Despite the stir, the boundary wall construction continued smoothly at Nuagaon. Construction work at Polang under Gadakujang panchayat is expected to resume in 2-3 days.

Jeevanlal Behera, head of Gadakujang panchayat said that the contractors and some agents of Posco are attempting to foil the agitation but their efforts will not be successful. On Wednesday, activists of Posco Pratirodha Sangram Samiti (PPSS), the anti-Posco outfit, have planned to hold a rally at Dhinkia against the project and burn effigies of Union Minister for environment and forest Veerappa Moily and South Korean President Park Geun-Hye.

(Source-http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/fishermen-oppose-posco-s-captive-port-114011400948_1.html#.UtjslF8Pivc.gmail)

Girl branded witch, thrown out of school

KEONJHAR: The district administration on Sunday ordered an inquiry after a seven-year-old tribal girl of Telkoi Talasahi Primary School, about 60 km from here, was allegedly sent back home on the suspicion of being a witch the previous day. Sources said she went to school after the Xmas holidays, but the teachers stopped her from entering the hostel and instead asked her to leave. Her father Birsingh Munda went to the tehsildar, Telkoi block, and lodged a complaint. Additional district magistrate, who holds additional charge of collector (Keonjhar), Sangram Keshari Swain and district education officer Krushna Chandra Naik visited the school to investigate the allegation. "The girl is back in school," said Naik. Swain said the allegation was found to be true. "Action would be initiated against the headmaster and a gana sikshyaka," he said.

(Source-http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2014-01-06/bhubaneswar/45917216_1_witch-xmas-holidays-headmaster)

Odisha: 10-yr old girl raped, youth arrested in Jajpur

Jajpur (Odisha): A youth has been arrested from Jajpur Keonjhar Road station on charges of raping a ten-year-old school girl at Managobindapur village in Odisha's Jajpur district, police said today. The medical examination of the girl has confirmed rape, the police said. The accused has been identified as Tapan Kumar Mirdha (28) of Sadar police area in Balasore district. "We were raiding several places in a bid to nab the accused. Finally we managed to arrest him from the railway station while he was trying to board a Howrah-bound train late on Saturday night," the police said. According to the FIR filed by the girl's father

with the Jajpur Road police, the girl who is studying in Class V at an upper primary school of Managobindapur village went to school along with her classmates on Friday. While returning home alone after school, Tapan, a native of Balasore and staying in a rented house at the same village, lured her by giving chocolates. He then took her to his rented house and raped there. "The girl informed her parents about the sexual assault after reaching home," the police said. The girl's father approached the village committee the same night but the accused absconded from the village after the matter was reported to the village committee. An FIR was then filed against the accused with the local police on Saturday and the girl was sent for medical examination. Based on the medical report, police registered an offence under Section 376 of IPC (Punishment for rape) and under section 4 of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 against Tapan. The accused was produced before a court yesterday after being medically examined. He has been remanded to judicial custody.

(Source-http://odishatoday.com/viewnews.php?news_id=6103)

Minor Girl Kills Self after Molestation

A Class IX student of a Government high school committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling in her house at Uparagada village under Korei police limits here after she was allegedly molested by a youth of her village on Sunday.

The accused Rajan Bhoi (20) was arrested and forwarded to the court on Monday. Later, he was remanded to judicial custody after his bail plea was rejected, police said. Police said while the girl was returning home after taking bath in a nearby nullah, Ranjan waylaid and molested her. Hearing her scream, locals who were working in nearby fields rushed to her help. They caught hold of the accused, tied him to a tree and informed police. Shocked over the incident, the girl ran back home and committed suicide when her parents were away, police said. "When the molestation news spread, the minor girl, who was a brilliant student also, felt ashamed and decided to end her life to escape public embarrassment," said Deepak Kumar, Jajpur SP. On being informed, police rushed to her house and found the body hanging from the ceiling.

(
Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Minor-Girl-Kills-Self-after-Molestation/2014/01/07/article1987441.ece>)

Missing boy's body found in abandoned toilet

Mystery shrouded the death of a nine-year-old boy whose body was recovered from an abandoned toilet at an upper primary school at Tilottamadeipur Sashana in Ganjam district, about 55-km from here today, police said. The deceased, identified as Akash Behera, a Class IV student of Narayanpur, a nearby village, was missing since Wednesday afternoon. He was not seen after he played with others in the village. Family members and villagers searched him as the boy did not return to the house in the evening. The boy's body was found from the abandoned toilet in the school, said sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Aska Sarah Sharma. Some injury marks were found in the body. "We suspect some miscreants might have killed the child and thrown his body in the unused toilet in the school," the SDPO said. "We are pressing the scientific team and dog squad for investigation of the murder", Sharma said. Balaram Behera, the father of the deceased boy, works in Surat in Gujarat. His mother Namita lodged a complaint at the local police station.

(
http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/missing-boy-s-body-found-in-abandoned-toilet-114010200944_1.html)

Girl found dead in Ganjam

A 17-year-old girl was found dead in her house at Baliasara village in Kabisurya Nagara area of Ganjam district, police said today. The body of the deceased, a Class X student in the local high school, was recovered from her room yesterday. Her father and mother had died some years ago and she was living with her grand-father and grand-mother in the house, sources said, they said. Police suspected that she might have been stoned to death by some unidentified miscreants on Friday night as injury marks were seen near her eye-brow. "Some miscreants might have stoned her to death during night while she was asleep in the room," said sub divisional police officer (SDPO), Chhatrapur, A.Ch Pahi. The old grand-father and grand-mother of the deceased were asleep in another room of the house while her brother had gone to Berhampur, police said. At this stage it is difficult to say whether the girl had been raped before being killed, police said. "We have initiated investigation from all angles and wait for the report of the post-mortem," said SDPO. He said the police scientific team and dog squad were pressed for the investigation.

(source-http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/girl-found-dead-in-ganjam-114011200529_1.html)

70 rescued kids to reach Odisha today

BERHAMPUR: Odia children rescued from a home at Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu are likely to arrive in the state on Wednesday. "They left Coimbatore on Tuesday and will arrive in Paralakhemundi on Wednesday," said collector (Gajapati) Basudev Bahinipati.

Over 140 children between five and 12 years of age were rescued by Coimbatore administration from a privately-run home. They are from Gajapati, Kandhamal, Rayagada and Koraput districts. While some were handed over to their parents, who are present in Tamil Nadu, 70 are in brought back to the state in the first phase. The rest will return after a few days. Two officers, including one a member of the child welfare committee in Gajapati district are accompanying the children. The condition of children, their native place and purpose of going to Tamil Nadu would be known only after they arrive here, the collector said. The Coimbatore administration rescued over 250 children from the home after ordering its closure. The centre was shut following the death of a 12-year-child from Bihar. Thirty-three children were hospitalized due to alleged food poisoning and consumption of contaminated water. Coimbatore police also arrested two officials of the home. "The rescued children belong to Mohana and R Udayagiri blocks of Gajapati district," said district child protection officer (Gajapati) Arun Kumar Tripathy. Their parents might have been lured by some child traffickers promising to provide free food and education to them, he said. In 2012, 53 children from Gajapati district were rescued from different childcare homes and churches in Kanyakumari and Coimbatore districts of Tamil Nadu. Police also arrested the person, who had allegedly taken them outside the state promising free food and education.

(source- http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2014-01-08/bhubaneswar/45989974_1_gajapati-coimbatore-mohana)

11 girls rescued from traffickers in Athagarh

CUTTACK: Eleven minor girls were rescued from Ghantikhal railway station in Cuttack's Athagarh block on Wednesday by police and District Child Protection Cell (DCPC) when they were being allegedly trafficked to Andhra Pradesh. Government railway police have detained two touts, Kuni Patra and Sahadev Sahoo. The touts along with the girls were ready to board an Andhra Pradesh-bound train when the GRP and officials of DCPC intercepted them and rescued the girls. "After seizing the cellphones of touts, we came to know that some of their gang members will board the train from Khurda and Dhenkanal along with some

other girls. We alerted police there and their associates were detained," said DCPC officer Pragati Mohanty. Of the 11 girls, six belong to different villages of Athagarh while five are from Dhenkanal . All girls are aged between 14 and 17 years and are tribals. The girls belonging to Athagarh were handed over to their families while those from Dhenkanal were handed over to police. "We have requested the police to find out addresses of children and reunite them with their families," added Mohanty. She said they are trying to verify whether the girls were being taken to Andhra Pradesh with the consent of their parents. Collector (Cuttack) Girish S N said the matter will be inquired into. "Our officials will visit the girls' families and inquire if they were migrating. We will take steps to address the problem," he added. Child rights activist said minor girls from poor families were being trafficked to other states through middlemen on promises of employment, but in most cases they are engaged in flesh trade.

(source-http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2014-01-09/bhubaneswar/46029342_1_athagarh-11-girls-government-railway-police)

Students' Torture: Principal Arrested

Principal of Sai Krupa Residential Mahavidyalay Tushar Mohanty was arrested by Dhenkanal Town police for allegedly torturing and abusing the students here on Monday. He was forwarded to local court. But police are yet to trace the Chairman of the college who also faced the same allegation. Following complaints lodged by parents of the students on Sunday, Town police started investigation. The students have already vacated college hostel. District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) Anuradha Goswami and her team have also started an inquiry into the complaints of parents who had sought her intervention as the girls are below 18 years of age. The complaint deserves inquiry under Juvenile Justice Act, said the DCPO. Meanwhile, Child Welfare Committee (CWC) of the district, a statutory body, is now defunct as posts of its Chairman and a lady member have been lying vacant. DCPO said CWC is a facilitating and coordinating agency and is empowered to launch inquiry into allegation of torture of minor girls and boys. Town police IIC Manas Gadnaik said they had arrested the Principal as he had not made any intervention on their complaints. "We are making efforts to trace the chairman," he added. Miscreants Open Fire One Smruti Ranjan Bal sustained bullet injuries when a group of three to four armed miscreants opened fire on Dhenkanal-Kapilash road under Sadar police limits on Monday. The incident occurred while the victim was going on bike with his wife and minor son. They were rescued by 108 ambulance. Bal is undergoing treatment at SCB medical, Cuttack.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Students-Torture-Principal-Arrested/2013/12/17/article1949750.ece>)

Minors 'tortured' in custody

CUTTACK: Two minor boys were allegedly tortured in railway protection force (RPF) custody for about eight days before being rescued by social workers on Tuesday. The boys, aged 14 years, alleged that the RPF personnel detained them on December 31 for stealing a cellphone at the Cuttack railway station. "Police officers beat us up with a cane. They gave us food only once a day and did not allow us to use the toilet," said one of the boys. The teenagers from Jobra's Harijan Sahi bore injury marks on their hands and legs. Secretary of Legal Support and Social Action Gadadhar Sahoo said their parents met the inspector-in-charge A K Dash and requested him to free their children but in vain. Refuting the allegations, Dash said, "The boys were not tortured." The social organization said it will move the Orissa high court and Odisha Human Rights Commission on Wednesday, seeking stringent action against the RPF officials.

(source-http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2014-01-08/bhubaneswar/45990694_1_odisha-human-rights-commission-rpf-railway-protection-force)

Chhattisgarh woman gangraped at railway station in Odisha

A 25-year-old woman from Raipur was gangraped by four men at Cuttack railway station on Saturday night, Odisha police said on Sunday. A mediaperson and some other people found the woman wandering in a market in the city on Saturday night and took her to a women's police station where an FIR was lodged. The woman told police that she had left her home in Raipur in Chhattisgarh after a fight with family members and took a train to Puri in Odisha. On her way back, she got down at the Cuttack station. She said some men, on the pretext of helping, took her to a dark place in the station and raped her. Later, they dumped her at a platform. "Yesterday night around 9 pm, we saw the woman crying in Buxibazar. We asked her what had happened. She was unable to express her ordeal as she was speaking in Hindi. We took her to Mahila Police Station when we came to know about the incident and registered an FIR," said Pravas Acharya, the mediaperson. The woman had injuries on her legs and hands, he said. However, police said the woman girl was unable to narrate her story clearly. "We are yet to ascertain the veracity of the allegations as the woman is not able to give any proper statement. At present, she is not mentally stable," said Sujata Jena, inspector in-charge of Mahila Police Station. Police were questioning the girl about the incident. Cuttack DCP Praveen Kumar said a case has been registered. "She said she was raped by four youth. We will conduct her medical test. But we have not able to contact her family members yet."

(source- <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/chhattisgarh-woman-gangraped-at-railway-station-in-odisha/1/335842.html>)

Another Woman Burn Victim Dies

After Tikiri teacher Itishree Pradhan was burnt to death, another woman was set on fire after being stabbed by miscreants at Diandain village under Rambha police limits in Ganjam district. The victim, Pranati Das, who was admitted to MKCG in Berhampur with over 80 per cent burn injuries, was later shifted to a Visakhapatnam hospital where she succumbed on Tuesday. Police arrested Manas Ranjan Nayak, a BJD Sarpanch of Sana Ramchandrapur panchayat, his associates Sudhir Nayak, Bilas Nayak and Kedar Nayak for their alleged involvement in the crime. Another accused, Kameswar Nayak, is still at large. Pranati was attacked by five accused while she was returning home near Panthaniwas at Rambha on Monday evening. There was power cut in the area when the assailants stabbed her and poured petrol on her before setting her ablaze. The five accused had enmity with the woman, who was a ration dealer, following which they had issued a letter threatening her. A complaint had been lodged in this connection. During distribution of Phailin relief, the accused had levelled allegations of misappropriation against her. Police seized the letter and are investigating. The accused had also recently set Pranati's house ablaze, which was reported to the police. But there was no written complaint. Before being shifted to Visakhapatnam, Pranati named three persons who attacked her and set her ablaze. Police seized a knife, a match box and a jerkin from the spot.

(source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Another-Woman-Burn-Victim-Dies/2014/01/01/article1976534.ece>)

Woman Burnt Alive by Husband

One Pramila Das of Baulanga village under Pattamundai police limits was burnt alive by her husband here on Tuesday.

Police arrested Pramila's husband Gopabandhu Das on the charge of uxoricide on Wednesday. He was produced in the court of Judicial Magistrate First Class, Pattamundai. The court rejected his bail application and remanded him to judicial custody. IIC of Pattamundai police station Amitav Mohapatra said the accused admitted the crime and further investigation was on. Police made the arrest following the FIR lodged by Pramila's father Gopinath Das alleging that Gopabandhu had killed his daughter. Gopabandhu had been torturing Pramila finding fault with her for being unable to conceive child. They were married for 10 years.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Woman-Burnt-Alive-by-Husband/2013/12/19/article1953389.ece>)

Tribal families seek intervention of revenue officials

Despite getting land patta from the State Revenue Department, 18 tribal families in Gajapati district are unable to take possession of the provided land to construct their houses. These tribals are from Panchaamba village under Labhasingh mouza in Gajapati district. This village falls in the area in Gajapati district where Tibetan refugees had been settled during the sixties of last century. As per the aggrieved landless tribals of Panchaamba village, it is an irony that government is not providing any support to them to take over the land for which patta was provided to them, while the Tibetan settlers continue to hold illegal possession on government land in the area.

These 18 tribal families have received support of the organisation Adivasi Dalit Vikas Samity (ADVS) which is continuing agitation against alleged land grabbing by Tibetan settlers in Chandragiri area of Gajapati district. The ADVS alleged that this incident hinted at the fallacy of the State government's claim regarding provision of land to the landless tribals in the State. Speaking to *The Hindu* regarding the issue, adviser of the ADVS, Jagannath Mishra said as per the old revenue records a patch of government land near Panchaamba village had been earmarked for tribal homes. But it was never in the possession of the local tribal families. The ADVS had raised the issue and impressed upon the government and Gajapati district administration to give provide pattas to the landless families of the village. Due to it, the government was forced to direct the revenue department to provide patta for the patch of land to 18 landless tribal families of the village, said Mr Mishra. The tribal families got the patta five months back. But till now they have not been able to take possession of the land for which they got the patta to start construction of their houses. These tribals allege that when they tried to take possession of the land for which they had the patta, they did not get the support of the local revenue officials. The revenue officials only demarcated their plots and did not prefer to provide physical possession to the tribals. "Irony is that when the tribals tried to build their houses on the land for which they had the patta, they faced harassment at the hands of the local police as well as principal of a school for Tibetan settlers in the area," said Mr Mishra. The ADVS has demanded the State revenue department to intervene in the matter so that the landless tribals with the patta provided to them could take physical possession of the land provided in their name as early as possible. Unless they get the land early, it would not be possible for them to construct their houses by the start of next monsoon rains, the ADVS leaders said.

(source-<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/tribal-families-seek-intervention-of-revenue-officials/article5497217.ece>)

NHRC Seeks Report on Farmer's Suicide

By Express News Service - BALASORE

Published: 09th January 2014 10:14 AM

Last Updated: 09th January 2014 10:14 AM

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought action taken report from Chief Secretary Jugal Kishore Mohapatra on suicidal death of a farmer in Soro area of Balasore district within four weeks. The instruction came following a petition filed with the NHRC by human rights activist Akhand. He had moved the NHRC seeking compensation and rehabilitation to the victim's family. The petitioner alleged that let alone compensation, the district administration did not even conduct an inquiry to know the reason of the suicide. The share cropper, Laxmidhar Pradhan (42) of Sitapur village under Pakhar Panchayat, ended his life after sustaining crop loss due to cyclone Phailin on November 20. Laxmidhar had consumed pesticide after failing to withstand the pressure from local landlords to repay the loan he had taken from them. He had borrowed about `30,000 from four persons of the area but was unable to repay it as his crops in four acres were completely destroyed. He is survived by wife, three sons and one daughter, all minors. This was fifth farmer suicide in less than two months in the coastal district. Earlier, four farmers of Soro, Sadar and Basta areas had committed suicide after failing to repay their agricultural loans. While Phailin induced flash flood caused extensive damage to paddy and vegetable crops in 11 blocks of the district barring Khaira block, poor and marginal farmers besides the share croppers were the worst hit. Laxmidhar's wife Mataji Pradhan said he was in stress since the flood damaged the standing crop in October. "He was more depressed when people started demanding their money. Failing to bear the trauma and humiliation, he committed suicide," she said alleging that the authorities did not take any action or provide any help despite her repeated appeals. Akhand had appealed to the NHRC seeking justice for the farmer's family and adequate compensation for Pradhan's family as per Government guidelines.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/NHRC-Seeks-Report-on-Farmer%E2%80%99s-Suicide/2014/01/09/article1990875.ece>)

Odisha: NHRC issued notice to RPF DG over custodial torture to minor boys

Report by Pratap Pradhan, Bhubaneswar: The National Human Rights Commission has issued notice to Railway Protection Force(RPF) Director General in the case of custodial torture to minor boys Cuttack. Acting on three different complaint of rights activist Chandranath Dani, Dr Subash Mohapatra and Akhand, the commission has registered three different case in the matter and directed the authorities to file a report within four weeks.

Two minor boys have been tortured for seven days in a police custody by Railway Protection Force(RPF) officials in Cuttack. The victims are Lokanath Nayak(12) of Jobra Hadi Sahi and Vikash Patra(13) of Fandi Chhak . RPF police station officials had detained both the minor on 31 December from Cuttack Railway station area and tortured till 7 January. The complaint alleged that it is a gross human rights violation by the RPF officials. They have treated with the minors like a dreaded criminal. Even RPF had not produced them before the magistrate with in 24 hours as per the law. They applied third degree treatment to the victims. There is no action against the guilty RPF officials and no compensation and rehabilitation of the victims, said Akhand. He prayed for suitable compensation and action against guilty officials. Chairman, Railway Board, Director General, Railway Protection Force, D.G., Police, Odisha and Cuttack District Collector, Cuttack are parties in the case. It should be noted that two minor boys, allegedly illegally

detained and tortured by RPF personnel for seven days, were rescued in Odisha. Bikash, 14, and Loknath, 12, were rescued from the Railway Protection Force (RPF) police station at Cuttack, 26 km from here, by the child protection officials Tuesday. The alleged confinement and torture came to light after some local media persons reached the RPF police station following the information provided by the victims' families, and the media persons informed the administration. Both the boys, residents of a city slum, told the officials that they were kept in the RPF lockup since Dec 31.

(source-<http://www.orissadiary.com/CurrentNews.asp?id=47086>)

NHRC sought report from Odisha Health Department over mistake in Sterilization Camp

Report by Odisha Diary bureau, Bhubaneswar: The National Human Rights Commission has sought a report from Health department of Odisha over mismanagement of sterilization camp in Dhenkanal. Acting on a complaint of rights activist Akhand, the commission has directed the principal secretary of health and family welfare Department to file a report in the matter within six weeks. Here it is noted that, over 151 semi-conscious women were dumped outside after a mass sterilisation camp at Sriramchandrapur Community Health Centre(CHC) at Gandia in Dhenkanal District (Odisha) as there was no room in the hospital. Sriramchandrapur Health Centre, where the family-planning procedure was carried out on December 12, was not equipped to accommodate such a large number of patients. So the semi-conscious women were dumped outside the hospital. Some women were taking rest in the floor of hospital barrandha. Some women were sent home in rickshaws before the mandatory observation period. It is a violation of Human rights of women patients and NHRC took cognizance of it, informed Akhand in his petition. There was only one operating doctor in the sterilization camp. According to provision not more than 50 women should not be sterilized by a doctor in such a camp. But more than 150 women called for this operation and there was only one doctor. Some had to wait more than 7 to 8 hours to his turns. Health Department is not taking any actions against such wrong practice by the doctors and CDMOs, alleged the petitioner. He prayed for Stringent action against erring officials and compensation to each patients suffering the problems in the camp. –

(source-<http://www.orissadiary.com/CurrentNews.asp?id=47195>)

Odisha Human Rights Commission moved against police

BHUBANESWAR: A woman from Kandhamal district moved the Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) here on Monday, accusing the Ganjam police of branding her son as 'Maoist supporter'. The woman, Kalemang Mallick, also alleged that police claimed her son to be 20 years old even though he was 17. The Kui-speaking woman of Katringia village in Bramhanigaon alleged that Badagada police picked up her son, who was on his way to meet his sister at Ranpur in Nayagarh district on December 10. "The family came to know about his arrest on December 16. Though he was a minor, police illegally kept him in custody till December 15 and formally showed his arrest the same day," said her lawyer Bibhu Prasad Tripathy. "If he was a Maoist sympathizer, police should have produced him before the Juvenile Justice Board and sent him to a juvenile home. But he is languishing in jail," Tripathy said. He alleged that police did not inform the woman or her family after arresting him. The woman has demanded immediate release of her son and action against police. SP (Ganjam) Ashish Kumar Singh said the woman has not brought to his notice her son's age. "We have evidence he is a Maoist supporter," Singh told TOI. Police said some explosives and Maoist literature were seized from him.

(Source-http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-12-31/bhubaneswar/45738328_1_odisha-human-rights-commission-ganjam-maoist)

Palm Chopping Savage Crime, Says NHRC

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought a detailed report from the State Government on the chopping off of palms of two migrant labourers by middlemen in Kalahandi district on the night of December 15. The commission has asked the Chief Secretary and the DGP to submit a report on the steps taken to identify and arrest the culprits along with medical attention provided to the victims, by January 2. It has also sought information on the compensation as well as the steps to be taken for rehabilitation of the victims. The commission, while taking note of the incident, has termed it as most brutal and savage crime and said the authorities should spare no effort to bring the culprits to book. The victims are among the most vulnerable sections of the society and will need immediate and continuing support from the Government, it noted. The Government has been directed to inform the whereabouts and current status of the companions of the two victims, who had allegedly fled from the clutches of labour contractor, which led to the attack on the duo. The commission also wanted to know if the contractor, who was taking the workers from the State, had the required licences and permissions under the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act. Meanwhile, the failure of the Government in rehabilitating migrant labourers, who were rescued from different States, has drawn attention of the NHRC. NHRC Joint Commissioner A K Parashar has taken note of the matter raised by Aide et Action, South Asia, and treated it as a complaint. Aide et Action regional head, migration, Umi Daniel, submitted that as many as 494 migrant bonded labourers had been rescued from the clutches of employers outside the State at different times, but are yet to be provided with rehabilitation assistance under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. As per the Act, bonded labourers are entitled to Government assistance of `20,000 for rehabilitation. According to the complaint, as many as 196 migrant bonded labourers from Balangir district were not paid rehabilitation assistance followed by 184 from Bargarh, 102 from Nuapada and 12 from Sambalpur districts. Around 1,139 labourers had been rescued from different States.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Palm-Chopping-Savage-Crime-Says-NHRC/2013/12/19/article1953337.ece>)

Odisha: NHRC sought report form District Collector, SP and CDMO of Puri in Medical negligence case

Report by Priyabrata Nayak, Bhubaneswar: The National Human Rights Commission has sought a report from District Collector, SP and CDMO of Puri in case of a medical negligence case by a private hospital. Acting on a complaint of Human Rights Activist Mr. Akhand, the apex human rights body has directed these seniors officers to submit their reports with in four weeks. The Petitioner has alleged before the commission that due to wrong operation, one minor girl Pujarani swain(13) had died on 24 October in Baulasahi village under Pipili Police station of Puri District Odisha. Doctors in Gopinatha Private Hospital in Sakhigopal under Puri District had operated with Pujarini on 23 June last year. From that day Pujarani's life became miserable. Within an year she became face multiple organs failure that leads to her death. Facing these problems following this operation the father of victim Makara swain made an F.I.R. in Satyabadi Police station. But police have not taken any step against the Private Hospital. He approached Puri District Collector and CDMO. But no one helps him, alleged Akhand. Makara being a very poor man could not provide further treatment to her girl. After unbearable pain his daughter succumbed to her injury on 24 October . The petitioner prayed for a compensation of 10 lakhs to the victim's family and action against the medical staff.

(Source-<http://www.orissadiary.com/CurrentNews.asp?id=47109>)

Woman dies of diarrhoea, over 50 ill

BERHAMPUR: At least a woman died of diarrhoea and over 50 are suffering in four villages of Ganjam district. The deceased was identified as Bhanu Behera, 62, of Patrapur. Seven and 10 persons are suffering from diarrhoea at Patrapur and Talapada villages respectively in Patrapur block. Twelve persons fell ill at Khemundikhola village of Sanakhemundi block, while 25 are affected at Ranigaon village of Purushottampur block. The patients are undergoing treatment in hospitals near their villages and their condition is stable, said in-charge chief district medical officer (CDMO) L K Rath. Mobile medical units have also been sent to the affected villages. "Death of a woman reportedly from diarrhoea is under verification," the CDMO said. He said consumption of contaminated water is the main reason behind outbreak of the disease. Disinfection of water sources has been started and people were advised to drink boiled water. "I have already written to the executive engineers of rural water and sanitation supply (RWSS) to filter the water and carry out its chlorification before supplying it to the people," the CDMO said. Villages have been supplied with drinking water through pipes only after filtration and chlorification. "There is no chance of supplying contaminated water to people through pipelines," said executive engineer, RWSS (Berhampur), Sitaram Panda. Field staff have been directed to check if there is any leakage or contamination of water anywhere, he added.

(source-http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2014-01-10/bhubaneswar/46065902_1_l-k-rath-diarrhoea-contaminated-water)

Compiled by – Ranjit Sutar, CSNR, VIM-489, Sailashree Vihar, Bhubaneswar -21, Odisha, Email: csnrorissa@gmail.com, Ph: 0674-2741557