

HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS UPDATE

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

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Security Guard Dies in Bhusan Steel

Tension prevailed on the Bhusan Steel Limited (BSL) premises here following death of a security guard on Thursday. According to reports, the security guard Saroj Bhokta (50) died on duty. He was going to the Phase II project site in a vehicle after punching his biometric card when he complained of chest pain. He was brought to a nearby nursing home and later shifted to Angul Hospital. He died on way to the hospital. As the news spread, thousands of BSL workers staged demonstration demanding adequate compensation to the family of the deceased. Saroj was working in the factory under a contract agency. The management has decided to pay `two lakh to the deceased's brother Soumendra and the private security agency will pay `10 lakh to the family. Bhusan Steel Shramik Sabha general secretary PK Biswal said the union has demanded a well-equipped hospital and a trauma care centre on the factory premises.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Security-Guard-Dies-in-Bhusan-Steel/2014/03/14/article2108093.ece#.UyqgaKiSzJg>)

Villagers Protest against Polluting Plant

Hundreds of villagers of Ekgharia on Saturday staged a demonstration in front of the regional office of the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) here against the polluting sponge unit Inter-continental Tar Refineries (ITR) near their village. The villagers said the poisonous gas emitted from the plant was affecting the health of the villagers badly. The effluents from the plant also pollute the water of river Brahmani. The villagers alleged that the SPCB has not taken any step even as the plant authorities continue to violate all norms of water and air pollution. They also threatened to intensify their agitation if the SPCB fails to close down the plant. The villagers were led by village president GC Debta and secretary CR Nanda. The Regional Officer of the Board here said he had received the memorandum from the villagers and he would look into their demands.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Villagers-Protest-against-Polluting-Plant/2014/02/24/article2074649.ece#.UyqiXaiSzJg>)

Another Worker Dies in Bhusan Steel

Tension ran high following death of a worker on Bhusan Steel Limited (BSL) premises here on Monday. Following the incident, thousands of workers disrupted work and staged demonstration in front of BSL main gate demanding adequate compensation for the family of the deceased, identified as Chhabi Pradhan (40). Sources said Chhabi was a rigger in Omm Enterprises, a private company working under BSL. He was returning from Blast Furnace-1 when he fell unconscious and was rushed to the first-aid centre on BSL campus and later referred to Angul Hospital. Chhabi, however, died on his way to the hospital. After the news spread, thousands of workers rushed to the main gate and staged demonstration demanding ` 15

lakh compensation and a job in BSL to Chhabi's kin. BSL Shramik Sabha general secretary PK Biswal said the strike will continue till the demands are met. Blaming the BSL authorities for Chhabi's death, Biswal said the company did not pay heed to the repeated demands of labour unions for an advanced health care facility inside the premises.

(source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Another-Worker-Dies-in-Bhusan-Steel/2014/03/04/article2089620.ece#.Uyqia6iSzJg>)

Odisha: POSCO-project area in Jagatsinghpur district continued to be tensed

Bhubaneswar: POSCO-project area in Jagatsinghpur district continued to be tensed on Tuesday. The supporters of the project have turned the heat of the steel major, who were antagonized on account of non-fulfilling of their demands. Now the supporters of the project have threatened not to let officials or company executive enter. They have put up a barricade at Nuagaon village in their bid to stop officials entry. The erection of blockade came close on the heels of eruption of violence in project area on Sunday when people razed a recently constructed boundary wall to ground. Villagers, who had been supporting the project ever since it signed MoU with State government, had long been demanding fulfilling of 14-point demands including increase in compensation for land losers and job for a person from family in the upcoming steel plant. .

(Source-<http://www.orissadiary.com/ShowBusinessNews.asp?id=48088>)

POSCO War Zone - Locals seal roads to POSCO site in Jagatsinghpur

PTI reported that a day after taking law into their hands to press for their demands, local people who are supporters of Posco's proposed steel project, today sealed all roads to the site in Jagatsinghpur district. The agitating people erected a bamboo barricade at the entrance point of Nuagaon village to prevent entry of company officials or Jagatsinghpur district officials into the proposed plant site. Mr Tirtharanjan Mantri, one of the agitators said that "We have decided not to allow entry of officials or company people unless the government holds discussion over our 14 point charter of demands." The agitation was being launched by the group known as the supporters of the South Korean steel major's project. They, however, started an agitation demanding fulfilment of their demands. The mantri said that we are supporting the project. The state government and the company should not take it at granted unless our demands are fulfilled.

(Source-

http://www.steelguru.com/indian_news/POSCO_War_Zone_Locals_seal_roads_to_POSCO_site_in_Jagatsinghpur/333069.html)

Maintain law and order at project site, Posco tells Orissa govt

Expressing concern over last month's violence at its project site in Jagatsinghpur district, Korean steelmaker Posco has requested the Naveen Patnaik government to maintain law and order in the area.

On February 16, hundreds of people, displaced from their land due to the project, torched Posco's pre-fabricated office and brought down a 300-metre boundary wall at Nuagaon village. The oustees also attacked workers of a construction company

engaged by Posco to build the boundary wall at the proposed site for the \$12 billion project. Following a five-month stand-off, Posco had started building the boundary wall on December 14. A 2-km wall had come up within two months.

In a letter to the Orissa chief secretary, Posco India CMD Yong-Won Yoon said the violence defeated the spirit of the company's MoU with the state government: "Certain anti-social elements demomished our boundary wall, set our offices on fire and also blocked entry into the site area. Incidences of violence have taken place earlier as well... Such incidents of violence, arsoning and destruction of our property are a blatant breach of law. It's not helpful for the project at all.

(Source-<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/maintain-law-and-order-at-project-site-posco-tells-orissa-govt/>)

Odisha: FRA violated in Keonjhar to favour mining company-

Campaign for Survival and Dignity, an NGO in Odisha that works to facilitate and ensure just implementation of the FRA, has made allegation levelling charges of conspiracy on the Keonjhar District Administration for being engaged in rampant diversion of forest land to favour Essel Mining and Industries Ltd. in violation of Forest Rights Act and Forest Conservation Act of India.

HNF Correspondent

Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006, Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) circular, other forest and environmental laws are being grossly violated by Odisha state machinery during diversion of forest land for most public and private sector projects. Such cases have become rampant in Odisha's mineral rich district of Keonjhar where administration violates laws to favour mining companies.

Campaign for Survival and Dignity (CSD), an NGO in Odisha that has been fighting for just implementation of the FRA in the country, has made this allegation in a press release while levelling charges of serious conspiracy on the Keonjhar District Administration for being engaged in rampant diversion of forest land to favour Essel Mining and Industries Ltd in violation of FRA.

The said project requires a total of 456.100 hectares of land for which forest land diversion is necessary.

CSD has questioned the manner in which "Gram Sabhas" were held in the affected villages of Jalahari, Bholbeda, Jajanga, Jurudi, Banspani and Khuntpani under Joda-Block, Badbil Tahasil, on 1st November 2013 to take approval for diversion of 342.602 hectare of forest land to facilitate the proposed project of Essel Mining and Industries in Kendujhar district. After visiting the affected villages and interacting with the tribal villagers, CSD found that the Gram Sabhas were held in violation of FRA and Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

CSD has also made serious allegations against the Sub-Divisional Level Committee (SDLC), Champua and District Level Committee (DLC) Keonjhar, formed as per norms of FRA, of giving approval for diversion of forest land on 24th December 2013 without complying the MoEF Circular of 30th July 2009 which clearly says that all State Governments are bound to have initiated and completed the forest rights settlement process before giving approval. Even sub section (a) of the circular says, "A letter from the State Government certifying that the complete process for identification and settlement of rights under the FRA has been carried out for the entire forest area proposed for diversion, with a record of all consultation and meeting held," must be obtained before giving such approval.

As per the 2009 Circular, individual and community forest rights of the people depended over it should have been settled before diversion of any forest land. "But the reality is that the District Administration has neither informed the affected tribal people about the norms set in FRA nor has it initiated any process for settlement of their rights, individual as well of community," complained CSD.

Allegation of violation of PESA (Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act of 1996 is also made in the press release placing the fact that the area comes under Schedule V of Indian Constitution. "Most of the families are landless in the affected villages. Even the Government has failed to provide land to the landless tribal families over the period," said the release.

The release says, while taking example of Jalahari village, there are 963 households in the village as per 2011 Census and only 10.89% of the village area is private land owned by 45 families, and as per RoR. Rest of the area amounting to 89.10% of the village is public land where most of the landless families depend for their subsistence. This land could have been handed over to the land less people as per FRA and other revenue laws. But instead of doing so, acquiring over 323 acres of the village land in the interest of a private company is unfortunate and, also, is a gross violation of constitutional rights of people of the village.

"Those who should have made the poor tribal community aware of their rights; who should have settled the rights recognized under FRA, are seriously engaged in helping the Private Mining Companies by holding arbitrary Gram Sabhas to ensure approval for diversion of forest land," the release said while pointing at a possible nexus between Keonjhar district administration and mining companies.

"District administration arbitrarily reported that out of 2045 villages in the district, process of individual forest rights recognition and settlement has already been completed in 1248 villages by 31st Dec 2013," mentioned the release adding that "the proceeding, dated 24.12.2013, of DLC, Keonjhar, reflects how the administration is seriously engaged in diverting large areas of forest land without duly considering the individual and community forest rights recognized by FRA."

As per the press release, CSD has filed a petition bringing such illegal attempts for diversion of forest land before the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, and has prayed to declare the gram Sabhas of 1st November 2013 as null and void since they have been held illegally. It also appealed for appropriate disciplinary action against the SDLC and DLC officials and to recognize the rights of the affected forest dwellers. CSD has also sought a CBI inquiry of the case alleging that the district administration is hand in glove with the Essel Mining and Industries Ltd. while allowing diversion of forest land in violation of forest rights act and all such other laws of the land.

(Source-<http://hotnhitnews.com/Odisha-FRA-violated-in-Keonjhar-to-favour-mining-company-HotnHitNews-12203032014.htm>)

Students fall ill from suspected food poisoning in Kalahandi

Bhawanipatna (Odisha): At least 34 students of a tribal ashram school at Karlakot under Jaipatna block of Odisha's Kalahandi were affected by suspected food poisoning today. The students complained of nausea and vomiting tendency shortly after eating in the morning, official sources said. The students were admitted to hospital and later discharged. District Chief medical officer, Surendranath Mohapatra said it appeared to be a case of food poisoning but exact cause was yet to be ascertained

(Source-http://www.odishatoday.com/viewnews.php?news_id=6335)

Keonjhar girl dies of food poisoning

Keonjhar: An 11-year-old tribal student, admitted to Keonjhar district headquarters hospital, died on Wednesday night. She was identified as Ratani Dehury of Upper Kampadihi village. Ratani was studying in Class VI in Upper Kusumita educational complex, run by SC/ST development department Project administrator, Integrated Tribal Development Agency (Keonjhar), B Behera said, "The girl suffered from food poisoning." In the night, the body was handed over to the family. "With the advice of the doctor, the body was handed over to her kin without conducting autopsy," Behera said. Due to poor hygiene and sanitation in the school, students are falling ill regularly. After a suspected outbreak of diarrhoea, a doctors' team visited the school, Behera added. According to official sources, there are two hostels functioning in the educational complex with capacity of 250 and 110. On Wednesday, some students were taken ill and admitted to Padmapur community health centre. Despite treatment, Ratani's condition deteriorated. She was shifted to district headquarters hospital at 7 pm. Around 2 am she died, hospital sources said. "The district administration paid Rs 15,000 to the family for the last rites. We will write to the government for Rs 1 lakh compensation to the kin according to norms," said district welfare officer Nityananda Das.

(Source-<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/Keonjhar-girl-dies-of-food-poisoning/articleshow/31139437.cms>)

Father jailed for killing baby daughter

A 30-year old tribal farmer has landed in jail for allegedly killing his two-month-old daughter here, police said.

Farmer Francis was sent to 14 day jail custody after a local court refused to grant him bail. Francis was caught by locals and taken to the Bisra police station in Odisha's Sundergarh district where he was arrested after his wife raised an alarm when he was trying to escape after allegedly killing his baby daughter in their residence, police said. Ameni, the farmer's wife, has alleged that her husband Francis had been threatening to kill the baby girl, their second child, since her birth because he always wanted a boy. She has further alleged that Francis used to misbehave with her as their first child was also a girl and the ill-treatment aggravated after she gave birth to another girl, police said. She said she had shifted to her in-laws' home two months back fearing threat to the new born. They had only come back on Friday after Francis convinced them that he would not harm the baby.

(Source-<http://odishasuntimes.com/35234/father-jailed-killing-baby-daughter>)

School Closed by Villagers, Students Study in Open

A tarpaulin sheet is all they have in the name of a school. Students of Dumerkela Government Primary School under Jharsuguda block are forced to study under a tarpaulin sheet from October 21 last year after their school building was locked by villagers in protest against the State Government's apathy. Following the lock-up, a temporary ramshackle structure was set up by the school authorities with the tarpaulin sheet forming the roof. On September 24 last year when Jharsuguda Collector was informed about the sorry state of affairs in the school, he made a surprise visit along with District Project Coordinator (DPC) of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) without informing the Village Education Committee (VEC). After a few days, headmaster of the school Basudeo Bhainsha was suspended by the authorities. When the villagers approached the Collector and the District Project Coordinator to question the reason of his suspension, no concrete answer was provided to them and in protest, the villages decided to lock up the school. President of School Education Committee Krishna Chandra Rohidas said the school was set up in 2003 with the efforts of Bhainsha and the land donated by another teacher. At present, 50 students are studying in the school. Under these circumstances, closure of the school and absence of a headmaster is hampering education. "The stand-off at the Dumerkela Primary School is unwarranted. Till date, no one has intervened to set things right," added Rohidas. Sub-Collector SK Tripathy said an inquiry report on the irregularities in the school was submitted to the

Collector following which suspension order of the headmaster was issued.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/School-Closed-by-Villagers-Students-Study-in-Open/2014/02/22/article2071173.ece#.UyrBO6iSzJg>)

Two rape cases shock Sambalpur

SAMBALPUR: Two rape cases have rocked the district even as police managed to nab the accused. While one case was reported from Dhuturapara here, another occurred under Thekolai police limits. Police registered cases after receiving complaints against the accused. Both accused and survivors were medically examined. While Deepak Hara, 35, is the accused in Dhuturapara case, Prasanta Kishan, 22, was held for Thekolai incident. Police sources said the survivor in the Dhuturaparaincident is a married woman. On Sunday night, the accused allegedly raped her finding her alone. "Deepak overpowered and raped her by gagging," IIC of Mahila police station Bandana Routray said. In the other incident, a 20-year-old unmarried girl alleged that she went with the accused to different places last week after he promised to marry her. But he left her alone on Sunday after raping her repeatedly, the survivor charged.

(source-<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/Two-rape-cases-shock-Sambalpur/articleshow/31381697.cms>)

Married woman found dead; family accuses husband of murder

Family members of a 21-year-old woman of Patrapada on the outskirts of the city, who was found dead under suspicious circumstances on Wednesday evening, lodged an FIR at Khandagiri Police station on Thursday alleging that she had been killed by her husband. The husband of the deceased woman Pratap Barik (34), however, claimed that his wife had committed suicide. The deceased was identified as Debadarshini Barik alias Ranu, wife of Pratap, both staying in a rented room at Patrapada here. According to Khandagiri police sources, Debadarshini, daughter of Bhramarbar Barik of Bantali village under Gop police limits in Puri district, got married to Pratap of Dhingar under Begunia police limits in Khurda district five years ago. Police further said yesterday evening Pratap informed the family members of Ranu about the death of his wife stating that she had committed suicide by hanging herself in the room where they stayed. Later local police, along with forensic team, reached the spot and found that her body was lying on the ground at their residence with injury marks on her body. "We are investigatiingthe matter after registering two cases from both the sides," said Inspector-in-charge of Khandagiri police station Sanjeev Satpathy. The local police have detained Pratap for interrogation. Police informed that the couple got married after a love affair. Unhappy over their marriage for not getting parent consent, Ranu's father didn't keep any relation with them. "We had started talking with the couple only a few months ago. Pratap had asked me for Rs 50,000 to build a house, but I could not give the money," said the father of Ranu, adding, "It might be the reason behind the murder of my daughter." Ranu's father said his daughter had several scars and injury marks on her body which clearly showed that she was killed. The claim of suicidal death that her husband Pratap had come up with was a ruse to cover up the murder mystery, he alleged. Meanwhile, a case under section 302 of IPC has been registered against the husband of the deceased by the local police. Yesterday, police had registered an unidentified death case in the matter.

(Source-<http://odishasuntimes.com/37703/married-woman-found-dead-family-accuses-husband-murder/>)

70-year-old woman sexually assaulted



Kendrapara (Odisha): A 70-year-old woman was allegedly sexually assaulted in a remote village in Odisha's Kendrapara district, police said yesterday. The accused, Geneswar Jena (29) has been arrested, police said. The incident which occurred on March 10 in Haldiapatna village has triggered public outcry. A police case was lodged yesterday and the accused was arrested yesterday, they said, adding that both the victim and the accused were medically examined.

(Source-<http://www.indiatvnews.com/crime/news/latest-year-old-woman-sexually-assaulted-5602.html>)

Hearing and speech-impaired woman raped in Kendrapara

In a shocking incident, a 32-year old hearing and speech impaired woman was allegedly raped by a 19-year old youth here, police said today. Sources in the Kendrapara Town police said the victim lodged a complaint on Saturday that she had been raped by a 19-year-old youth Pabitra Bal in the Badabaranga locality here. The police said they arrested Pabitra immediately and forwarded him to court on Saturday itself. The victim was also taken to the government hospital for a medical examination. Police said a case had been registered against the accused under IPC sections 354, 376 (rape) and 506 (criminal intimidation)

(Source-<http://odishasuntimes.com/34984/hearing-speech-impaired-woman-raped-kendrapara>)

Peon arrested for rape

A peon of a block office was arrested on the charge of raping a member of a women's self help group in government quarters at Danagadi in Odisha's Jajpur district, police sources said here today. The peon Ramesh Dalei alias Ramu had allegedly recorded the act committed about two months ago on his mobile phone with which he blackmailed the victim, the

sources said. It was alleged that the peon gave a drink laced with sedatives and raped her when she fell unconscious, they said. The peon was remanded to judicial custody after a local [court](#) rejected his bail plea.

(Source-http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/peon-arrested-for-rape-114022200762_1.html)

Woman Found 'Raped', Murdered in Jajpur

Mystery shrouds the death of a woman whose body was found near Vyas Nagar stadium under Jajpur Road police limits on Friday. The body of the deceased, Nandini Majhi of Rampas village, bore injury marks. Police said Nandini had eloped with Ganesh Majhi, a 28-year-old youth of Chunabhati village, two years back and they used to reside in Balasore. They eked out living by working as daily labourers. When Ranjan left Balasore after deserting Nandini a couple of weeks back, she returned to her native place and was staying with her mother. On Thursday night, she had come to the market to purchase some grocery items and did not return home. Her mother launched a frantic search, but in vain. The locals, who found the body on Friday morning, informed the police. The body was found in a naked condition and her saree was tied around her neck. Jajpur Road SDPO JK Das said prima facie it appeared that the woman was strangled to death with her saree. Police suspect that she was raped before being murdered. "The condition in which the woman was found indicate that sexual assault took place, which can only be confirmed in the post-mortem report," the SDPO added. No one has been arrested so far.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Woman-Found-%E2%80%98Raped%E2%80%99-Murdered-in-Jajpur/2014/03/01/article2084443.ece#.Uyq8saiSzJg>)

Married Woman Singer Raped

Cuttack Sadar police on Sunday arrested owner of Nirakar Tent House and Music Melody Party at Kakatpur on charges of raping a 30-year-old woman singer belonging to 42 Mauza. According to the FIR filed by the victim at Cuttack Mahila police station, 48-year-old accused Sridhar Nayak took her on his motorcycle to his house as she was not getting any transport to return to her home after completion of a melody programme at Patharpaka on the night of February 17. On the way, he raped her at an isolated place and threatened to kill her husband and two sons if she divulged the matter, the FIR stated. He even did not allow her to return home next day. But the victim managed to escape on February 18 evening when the accused took her to attend a melody programme at Nimapada. After returning home by a bus, the woman on Friday filed an FIR at Cuttack Mahila police station which forwarded the case to Cuttack Sadar police station next day. Medical examination of both the victim and the accused will be conducted on Monday, said DCP Sitaram Satapathy. Foundation Day Celebrated. The 30th foundation day of Swami Vivekananda National Institute of Rehabilitation, Training and Research (SV NIRTAR) was celebrated at Olatpur village under Kantapada block on Saturday. A meeting was organised in NIRTAR conference hall on the occasion. Among others, noted translator of Gujarati language Prasant Kumar Mahanty and Director, NIRTAR, Dr Rama Narayan Mahanty were present at the meeting.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Married-Woman-Singer-Raped/2014/02/24/article2074639.ece#.Uyq4T6iSzJg>)

NHRC Asks Odisha, WB Govts to Resolve Border Dispute

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the governments of Odisha and West Bengal to resolve their border dispute and provide the border villagers their basic rights. In a recent order, the commission has asked the chief secretaries of the two States to take action as deemed appropriate within the next eight weeks over the issue of protection of human rights of the residents, who have virtually become the 'victims' due to the dispute between Odisha and West Bengal governments. The apex human rights watchdog passed the direction while acting on a petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer and human rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy citing reports published in "The New Indian Express". He had moved the NHRC seeking immediate solution to the disputes people have been facing on border villages of northern parts of Odisha and pass such order as the commission deems fit "Both the State governments have failed to ensure basic human rights of the villagers living close to the borders of these two States. While poor infrastructure haunts them, they were deprived of many Government schemes and their legitimate rights, including the residential certificates," Tripathy pointed out in his petition. On July 23 and August 1 last year "The Express" had highlighted the plight of the border villagers and the inaction of the State Government in resolving the long-standing disputes. On record, people of Sankhamedi come under two villages ___ Sankhamedi (Ward No.18 of Analia Panchayat) of Bhogarai block in Odisha and Bagbrajakishore (Ward No. 14) of Ramnagar block in West Bengal. While Sankhamedi has about 320 voters, Bagbrajakishore has over 700 voters, including the rest from nearby West Bengal hamlets. Interestingly, despite 'dual-voting' rights for the last 30 years, as revealed by the villagers themselves, the Election Commission has apparently not taken note of it. Citing media reports, the petitioner further pointed out that the West Bengal Government was allegedly eyeing at least 11 villages that fall under Bhogarai and Jaleswar tehsils along with Udaypur sea beach of Balasore district. The villagers, however, do not have residential certificates. Non-issuance of residential certificates and denial of other benefits as provided by the State Government amounts to serious violation of human rights, Tripathy alleged. He requested the NHRC to direct the State to resolve the issue of habitation and status of citizenry of these villagers.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/NHRC-Asks-Odisha-WB-Govts-to-Resolve-Border-Dispute/2014/02/06/article2041210.ece#.UvhmAWKSzPk>)

OHRC seeks report in 3 weeks on 21 labourers held captive in AP

The Odisha Human Right Commission (OHRC) on Wednesday directed the State's Chief Secretary, Labour Commissioner and the Collector and Superintendent of Police (SP), Bargarh district to file a detailed report within three weeks for their alleged failure in safeguarding 21 migrant workers of the district. The family members of the workers, along with Goti Shramika Surakhya Mancha leader Rukmana Dev and social activist Biswapriya Kanungo, had submitted a petition on the issue at OHRC today. Abujha Amari, a migrant worker, said around 27 people, including women and children, from Bhaludunguri, Baidapali, Luhakhen and Tihigaon villages had been taken by two middlemen in January this year to work in a brick kiln run by one Kishan Seth in Chapatandi under Karimnagar police limits in Andhra Pradesh with the promise of good wages and comfort. "After one month of hard work, the owner of the brick kilns started ignoring us. We were deprived of even basic necessities. Later, they tortured us physically as well as mentally," Amari said. "Somehow, I, along with five others, managed to escape from the kiln and reached our homes contacting our family members. Twenty one others are still captive in the kilns who need to be rescued urgently," the victim informed. After reaching their home, they lodged a complaint with Gaisilat police station on February 20 last month narrating their torture and requesting the police to rescue the others still held captive. "But till date, police have not taken any action against the middlemen or arrested the owner of the brick kilns. No action has been initiated by them to rescue the others either," the family member alleged. "We had informed the whole matter to the Collector, SP, Labour Commissioner of the Bargarh district, but in vain," they said. The family members have requested OHRC chairperson to rescue the 21 workers still held captive by the brick kiln owner.

(Source-<http://odishasuntimes.com/39187/ohrc-seeks-report-3-weeks-21-labourers-held-captive-ap/>)

Rescue Migrant Labourers: OHRC

The Odisha Human Rights Commission on Wednesday directed the State Government to take immediate steps to rescue 21 migrant labourers of Odisha from forcible confinement at a brick kiln in Andhra Pradesh. Acting on the plea of relatives of the workers, Chairperson Justice B K Mishra directed the State Chief Secretary, Secretary of Labour and Employees State Insurance, Collector and SP of Bargarh to submit a report within three weeks. The relatives approached the Commission appealing for rescue of the workers from the kiln at Karim Nagar in Andhra Pradesh. They submitted that around 27 workers from several villages of Bargarh district had been hired by labour contractors to work in the brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh in December last year. They had been provided with advance for eight months work. However, their travails started as they started for work in the neighbouring State. They were robbed of the money allegedly by henchmen of the kiln owner. Despite being promised good wages and work conditions, they were forced into bonded labour, the relatives alleged. They also stated that the workers were intimidated and tortured. The issue came to light after two of the workers escaped and came back.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Rescue-Migrant-Labourers-OHRC/2014/03/20/article2119721.ece#.UyqyOqiSzJg>)

NHRC Seeks Report on Rescued Bonded Labourers

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Chief Secretary of the State to submit a report on the alleged denial of social security benefits to rescued bonded labourers within four weeks. Acting on a complaint of Global Human Right Communications (GHRC), the NHRC has also issued notice to Nuapada Collector seeking report on 350 bonded labourers rescued on December 30, 2013. In his petition to the NHRC, Executive Director of GHRC Subash Mohapatra alleged that Nuapada district administration rescued 315 bonded labourers from Jenjra Upgraded High School on December 20, 2013. The bonded labourers were trafficked to a brick kiln at Ayodhya. In a separate incident, 35 bonded labourers were rescued by the police from residence of a ruling BJD Councillor of Khariar Road. The police had also seized a vehicle, the petitioner said. Stating that the rescued bonded labourers are from Bargarh, Kalahandi and Nuapada districts, Mohapatra further alleged that the Government has not taken any initiative for their rehabilitation. He requested the Commission to direct the State Government to investigate the matter and take appropriate action against the culprits including the headmaster of the High School for the alleged confinement of the bonded labourers in the school premises. Meanwhile, the State Government has asked the district collectors and SPs of three districts to submit action taken reports on the matter within a week.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/NHRC-Seeks-Report-on-Rescued-Bonded-Labourers/2014/02/24/article2074672.ece#.Uyqyn6iSzJg>)

NHRC Seeks Report on Custodial Death

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the State Government to submit a magistrate enquiry report (MER) on the alleged custodial death of one Hemant Nayak of Bhuinpur in Khurda district in May 2013. The Commission has instructed the State Home Secretary to submit the MER within a month while also referring the case to a division bench for

further directions. The Commission received a complaint from rights activist Akhand that the police from Begunia had detained Hemant Nayak (30) along with three others on May 3, 2013, in connection with a case of eve teasing a girl. While others had returned home after questioning, Hemant's mutilated body was found hanging from a banyan tree near village Badaberana two days later on May 5. The victim's family and the villagers have alleged that the police had tortured and killed Hemant and then hung his body to give it a suicide angle. "It is a death in police custody. I prayed for an independent inquiry, registration of FIR against guilty police officials and compensation of ` 10 lakh to the kin as he was the only earning member in the family", said Akhand. In response to the earlier directions of NHRC, Additional DG Police, State Human Rights Protection Cell of Odisha Police had submitted the report of the Superintendent of Police, Khurda comprising post mortem report, video cassette of the inquest and enquiry by the SP. As per the post mortem report, the death could have been due to combined effect of asphyxia and various congestions due to hanging. The report mentions that inquiry is also being conducted by DM and Collector, Khurda as per the order of the State Government and the report is still awaited. Considering the arguments of the police, the Commission has directed the Secretary, Department of Home and District Magistrate and Collector, Khurda to submit the MER regarding the alleged killing of Hemant in police custody within four weeks. The commission has ordered to place the case before Division Bench for further directions.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/NHRC-Seeks-Report-on-Custodial-Death/2014/02/20/article2067272.ece#.UyrK4aiSzJg>)

Police inaction in minor kidnap: OHRC seeks report from Nayagarh SP in 3 weeks

The Odisha Human Right Commission (OHRC) has sought a detailed report from the Nayagarh Superintendent of Police (SP) within three weeks on alleged inaction by Odagaon police in a case involving the kidnap of a minor girl. According to a petition filed before OHRC chairperson Justice Bira Kishore Mishra by the victim's parents on Tuesday, Odagaon police have taken no steps to trace their daughter more than a month after she was kidnapped by one Sonu Pradhan (25) of Hariharpur village under Saranakul police limits in the same district from their house located near Odagaon College Road on January 28, while they were out of their house on work. "The father of the victim who runs a betel shop in the locality had filed a complaint in this regard at the Odagaon police station on January 30. But far from acting on the complaint, the local police took four days just to register an FIR in the case," said human rights activist and lawyer Biwapriya Kanungo, who filed the petition in the OHRC on behalf of the complainant. Even after registering the FIR, the police took no steps to trace the 10th standard girl or arrest the culprit who was booked under sections 363 and 506 of IPC, Kanungo said. "Emboldened at the police inaction, the accused even had the cheek to threaten the parents of the girl of dire consequences if they did not withdraw the case forthwith," he said. Alleging that the police had not done anything in the case under pressure from some influential persons of Hariharpur, the petitioner has demanded stringent action against the local police for their gross apathy in the case.

(Source-<http://odishasuntimes.com/35580/police-inaction-minor-kidnap-ohrc-seeks-report-nayagarh-sp-3-weeks/>)

NHRC Directs Police to Complete Tikiri Investigation in 8 Weeks

In a significant development, the National Human Rights Commission has directed the State Government to complete investigation into the alleged sexual assault and murder of school teacher Itishree Pradhan within eight weeks. The Commission has ordered Odisha DGP to submit the final outcome of the investigation by the Crime Branch within the stipulated two months. It has also instructed the State Chief Secretary to provide proof of payment of interim relief of `5 lakh to the kin of the deceased within the aforementioned period. The Commission had earlier, acting on two petitions filed by

rights activists Manoj Jena and Akhand, directed the Chief Secretary to pay an interim relief of `5 lakh to the alleged victim's family and to have the case investigated by Crime Branch. "While no proof of the payment has been received from the Government of Odisha, a report from the Crime Branch reveals that the investigation is yet to be concluded," the Commission noted. The school teacher had allegedly been set on fire at Tikiri in Raygada district on October 27. She had succumbed to her injuries at a hospital in Visakhapatnam on November 1. The killing is alleged to have been carried out to eliminate Itishree who had levelled sexual harassment charges against Sub Inspector of Schools Netrananda Dandasena. She had lodged a complaint against the accused with the local police but no action was taken. She had even approached the Raygada Collector on the issue but to no avail. She had written to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, DGP and the State Women's Commission seeking action against Dandasena. But no one listened to her and she was under pressure to withdraw her complaint, the petitioners alleged.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/NHRC-Directs-Police-to-Complete-Tikiri-Investigation-in-8-Weeks/2014/02/26/article2078183.ece#.UyrSQKiSzJg>)

NHRC sought ATR from Odisha Chief Secretary over Hirakud boat tragedy

Report by Priyabrata Nayak, Bhubaneswar: The National Human Rights Commission has sought action taken report (ATR) from Odisha Government over boat tragedy in Hirakud Dam Reservoir (HDR) in last February. Acting on a complaint of rights activist Akhand, the Commission has directed Chief Secretary to submit reports within four weeks time. 31 people died after a country boat carrying picnickers from Sambalpur town capsized due to overloading in HDR on 9 February. Tragedy struck when at least 70 members of Lions Club and 50 others were returning back to Sonutikra Ghat. About 30 motorcycles were also being transported in the boat. The picnickers boarded the boat around 4.15 pm and 15 minutes later, water started to gush into the boat from its base. Because of some technical snag in its motor, the boat could not move and began to sway unsteadily in the middle of the HDR. The petitioner alleged that the tragedy is due to negligence on part of district administration. After many demand, the state Government has not taken any safety measures in the boat in various river ghats of the state. This type of accident is occurred frequently in Odisha. "The indigenous boats have no license, no insurance, no registration also. No Quality control mechanism or fitness certificate is issued to such boats by the administration. No life jackets are provided to the passengers in the boats. So when any accident happens, many life are lost.", said Akhand. This incident is not single example. In past there are many such incidents in the various parts of the state. But Government has not taken any step to take any safety measures for the people, alleged Akhand. The Petitioner prayed for an order to take safety measure in various river Ghats, compensation of five lakhs each to the victim's family and action and penalty against the erring officials.

(Source-<http://www.orissadiary.com/CurrentNews.asp?id=48371>)

No doctor at Jharsuguda hospital maternity ward

JHARSUGUDA: Despite various government schemes for would-be mothers, the maternity ward of Jharsuguda district headquarters hospital is in a poor state owing to shortage of doctors. Of the 108 sanctioned posts, 38 are vacant. In the obstetrics and gynaecology department, there is only one specialist doctor against two posts. When he is on leave, patients are left unattended. The six posts of gynaecologists in the community health centres in the district are also vacant. Between 250 and 300 maternity cases come to the hospital every month with 40 needing Caesarian section. In the absence of the only doctor, all patients are referred to VSS Medical College and Hospital, Burla. An ultrasound machine installed in the ward on January 18 is gathering dust in the absence of an operator. Social worker Anandini Padhee said, "In the last decade or so, Jharsuguda has developed in all respects except health services. The maternity ward is in a bad shape. There should be more doctors. The government should prioritize these essential services." Chief district medical officer (Jharsuguda) Damayanti Sahoo said, "We have informed the government about the vacancies. One gynaecologist is there, but he is on leave till February 25." "After consulting the collector, we have asked some private hospitals to treat our patients for the time being. Besides, we have requested a retired doctor to visit the hospital from 7 am to 7 pm. We have also arranged an ambulance for taking patients to VSS hospital in case of emergency," she said.

(Source-<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/No-doctor-at-Jharsuguda-hospital-maternity-ward/articleshow/30838357.cms>)

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