

# HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS UPDATE

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

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## Settle Posco ore lease issue: Centre to Odisha

NEW DELHI: The Centre has asked the Odisha government to resolve without delay the issue of giving iron ore lease to Posco's Rs 52,000 crore steel project, the largest ever FDI in India. The development comes in the wake of a high-level panel's meeting last month. The committee was formed to address issues impeding mega projects in the steel sector. The South Korean steel player's plans to set up a 12-million tonne steel plant at Jagatsinghpur entailing an investment of Rs 52,000 crore has been stuck for the past eight years due to regulatory hurdles and delays in land acquisition. In May last year, the SC had set aside an Odisha HC order that quashed the state decision to allot iron ore licence to Posco in Khandadhar hills. "The SC judgment on the matter should be initial point for finding the way forward to resolve the issue. The state government in consultation with the ministry of mines should discuss and settle the matter without further delay," steel secretary G Mohan Kumar, who chairs the Inter Ministerial Group (IMG), has conveyed to the Odisha government.

(Source-<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Settle-Posco-ore-lease-issue-Centre-to-Odisha/articleshow/33353545.cms>)

## Govt pushes Odisha to expedite grant of licence to Posco

The ministry of external affairs (MEA) is pushing the Odisha government to expedite issuance of mining approval for South Korean steel major Posco. The move is aimed at placating the Koreans, upset over the Supreme Court order asking Samsung Chairman Lee Kun-hee to appear before a Ghaziabad trial court in a pending payment case. Although the \$12-billion steel plant project, languishing for over eight years, got approval for land a couple of months ago, the mining certificate for Posco to start captive iron-ore mining is still to be issued. In a face-saving attempt, the MEA has urged the state government to send the required forms it needs to give to the mines ministry and obtain the mining certificate so that it can grant a licence to Posco, sources told Business Standard. Apparently, the state government is causing the delay "intentionally", as it is awaiting implementation of Posco's commitment to build roads and a school in the area where the steel plant is coming up. However, sources said Posco will be able to do this only when it is equipped with the licence as that will help them obtain funds for the welfare schemes. The steel giant has plans to set up a 12-million-tonne steel plant in Odisha's Jagatsinghpur district. This is the biggest foreign direct investment India has ever received. The proposal had been awaiting approvals since 2005, as it got entangled in several regulatory and environment-related hurdles. Last month, the mines ministry informed an inter-ministerial group (IMG) which monitors the implementation of mega-steel projects in India that it was awaiting the state government's reply on the issue of grant of prospecting licence for the iron ore mine at Khandadhar. This happened after the IMG induced the mines ministry to apprise it of the steps taken to expedite the smooth implementation of the project after the Supreme Court's May 2013 verdict for grant of a prospecting licence to Posco. The apex court had set aside the Odisha high court order that quashed the state government's decision to allot an iron ore licence to Posco in the Khandadhar hills of Sundergarh district. It had asked the Centre to consider all the objections raised by various parties pertaining to the mega steel plant and take a decision.

(Source-[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-pushes-odisha-to-expedite-grant-of-licence-to-posco-114040700088\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-pushes-odisha-to-expedite-grant-of-licence-to-posco-114040700088_1.html))

## Mine push for Posco on election eve

SUBHASHISH MOHANTY

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** The state government has no objection to the Khandadhar iron ore mines in Sundargarh being allotted to South Korean steel giant Posco for its proposed eight-million-tonne plant in Jagatsinghpur district. The Naveen Patnaik government made its stance clear to the Centre in March before the model code of conduct for the general election came into force. Allocation of a captive mine for its Rs 52,000-crore operation was a major hurdle in the renewal of the MoU between the government and the company, which lapsed in 2011. The single largest FDI is struck for the last eight years because of various regulatory procedures and delays in land acquisition. "As the election process is on, whether the government at the Centre could allot the mines to anyone, is a debatable point. But, the ministry of mines has followed the orders of the Supreme Court and had sought our opinion," said an official of the state government. The state government had allocated the Khandadhar mines to Posco-India in 2009, but Orissa High Court had cancelled the order. Subsequently, the Odisha government had approached the Supreme Court. Setting aside the high court order, the apex court, in its order in May 2013, had asked the Centre to consider all the objections raised by different groups who had applied for mines and take a decision. It is in pursuance of the order, the Centre had asked the state government about its opinion on the mines being given to Posco-India. "We had recommended the Khandadhar mines to the Centre way back in 2009. We have reiterated our stand. The project is going to be a reality," said the official. He, however, refused to be quoted on the ground that the model code of conduct prohibited him from making any statement. Initially, Posco-India had asked for a captive mine and a captive port for its operation. Officials said that the company was no longer insisting on the port clause, but it wants assured supply of iron ores through captive mines, officials said. The project will get a major push after the elections. It has already got 1,703 of the 2,700 acres that it requires. "It will begin construction after the steel maker deposits another Rs 12 crore towards a forest diversion plan. A letter to this effect has already been sent to the company. We have also asked them to submit their action plan," said the official.

(Source-[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140407/jsp/frontpage/story\\_18159285.jsp#.UOIFf1WSzJg](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140407/jsp/frontpage/story_18159285.jsp#.UOIFf1WSzJg))

## **Woman denied BPL card, NHRC notice to Bhadrak Collector.**

**BHADRAK:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notice to Bhadrak collector, seeking information on plight of a woman, who is running from pillar to post to obtain a BPL card. The matter was taken up by the panel after rights campaigner Radhakanta Tripathy placed it before the body on March 3 and sought its intervention. The rights watchdog has sought information from the collector within four weeks of receiving the notice. Tripathy's petition said Gouramani Swain, 55, a destitute woman of Rathapada village in Bhadrak district, has approached all officials of Basudevpur block, but is yet to get the card. "The victim is an old woman having no family support. The local people out of generosity feed her once a while. She sleeps under open sky. Even though the media has reported her plight, the government is yet to act," Tripathy alleged. No inquiry has also been initiated into her grievance either. Gouramani, keeping last hope on forest and environment minister Bijayshree Routray, who is also local MLA, approached him at a public function, but in vain. Meanwhile, social campaigners have demanded an immediate enquiry by district administration into plight of the woman.

(Source-<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/Woman-denied-BPL-card-NHRC-notice-to-Bhadrak/articleshow/32661388.cms>)

## **Rights Panel Seeks Report on Ill Treatment of Women in FP Camps**

Repeated occurrence of ill-treatment of women in family planning camps in the State has drawn the notice of the National Human Rights Commission. The commission has sought a report from the State Government over a fresh incident of mismanagement in a camp in Balasore district, where around 90 women were allegedly dumped outside the hospital after undergoing the surgical procedure last month. While issuing notice to the State Government, the commission has directed the Health Secretary to submit a detailed report on the matter within six weeks. The incident had taken place at Jaleswar PHC under Balasore district on March 23. In gross violation of the guidelines, around 90 women were subjected to family

planning operations in the day-long camp. According to the petitioner, human rights activist Akhand, though the camp was set up to start from the morning, the doctors arrived after noon. The 90 women who had come to the camp were made to wait in the open for four to five hours before undergoing the procedures. Their travails were not over at that. They were again dumped on the verandah and the open field after the operations in semi-conscious state as the PHC is not equipped to accommodate such a large number of patients. This act amounted to serious violation of human rights along with clear guidelines issued by the Supreme Court, Akhand submitted. The guidelines stipulate that not more than 50 women can be put through the procedure in a single camp. But the Government has been repeatedly violating it. As many as 150 women were operated by a single doctor and faced similar situations at a camp in Dhenkanal district earlier this year, the petitioner stated. Though the matter has been brought to the notice of the Health and Family Welfare Department, no action has been taken. The NHRC has taken cognisance of at least four such cases, he added.

(Source-<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Rights-Panel-Seeks-Report-on-ill-Treatment-of-Women-in-FP-Camps/2014/04/10/article2160268.ece#.U0kRIIWSzJg>)

## Activist moves NHRC on death of a new-born in Govt hospital

Cuttack, Apr 10:

Lawyer and human rights activist Prabir Das has sought the intervention of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in a case involving the death of a new born in a government hospital in Odisha due to alleged negligence of medical staff on duty.

In his petition filed with the NHRC on Wednesday, Das has alleged that the child born to Manorama Jena, wife of Abhimanyu Jena of Garedeswar village died immediately after birth on April 8 due to the negligence of the medical staff in the labour room of the district headquarters hospital at Jajpur. Das has said that Manorama Jena was admitted to the district headquarters hospital for delivery on the morning on April 8, 2014. The doctor sent her to the Labour Room, but the nurse on duty did not attend to her saying there was time for the delivery to take place. The activist mentioned that writhing in severe pain, Manorama delivered a boy child at about 2.30 pm. In the absence of the nurse, the new-born fell from the table into a water-filled bucket and died. The petitioner has contended that the shocking death of a new born in the Labour Room due to the alleged negligence of the nurse in a district level government hospital tantamounts to violation of 'right to life' under Article 21 of the child and denial of proper care to the mother. The young advocate has sought the intervention of the Commission for ensuring proper inquiry, appropriate action and suitable monetary relief to the parents of the deceased child.

(Source-<http://odishasuntimes.com/45291/activist-moves-nhrc-death-new-born-govt-hospital/>)

## Activist questions deployment of hospital staff for poll duty in Puri

Odisha  
Bhubaneswar, Apr 10:

Sun

Times

Bureau

While the checklist for District Election Officers (DEOs) in connection with the conduct of General Elections, 2014 is clearly against deploying officials and personnel engaged in essential services for election duty, the guideline has been openly flouted in Puri district, well-known social activist Akhand said in a complaint to the Election Commission as well as the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Odisha today. Several employees of different hospitals in Puri district have been requisitioned for election duty for the second phase polls in the state to be held on April 17, in violation of the guideline, he alleged. In his complaint, the activist has drawn the attention of the CEO to the Commission's guideline that advises against the deployment of employees and personnel from CBI, IB, RAW and employees engaged in emergency services for poll duty. Stating that these hospitals are terribly understaffed- with either a single doctor or no doctor- and have inadequate para medical staff, the collector's order asking employees of these hospitals to join poll duty on April 17, will paralyse medical services in the district for at least three days and result in undue suffering for the public at large. Akhand has also drawn

attention of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the Director General and Principal Secretary of the Election Commission for their timely and immediate intervention

(Source-<http://odishasuntimes.com/45576/activist-questions-order-seeking-deployment-hospital-staff-poll-duty-puri/>)

## **Brahmani pollution: HC sends suo motu notice to Odisha govt**

Odisha  
Cuttack, Apr 7:

Sun

Times

Bureau

The Odisha High Court on Monday issued a suo motu notice to the Odisha government in connection with the pollution of Brahmani river and its tributaries.



Odisha High Court

A division bench of the court comprising Justice Indrajit Mohanty and Justice SC Parija issued notice to the chief secretary, secretaries of Industries, Water Resources, Revenue, Mines, and Forest and Environment departments, the collectors of Angul, Keonjhar, Jharsuguda and Jajpur districts and the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) to file an affidavit on the action taken by them to curb pollution in Brahmani river by May 9 next. The directive of the court came following a report in the media about the alarming pollution in Brahmani river—the second largest river of Odisha—followed by a letter from a well-known intellectual of the state to the court, seeking its early intervention in this regard. As per the case records, several newspapers had come up with reports on the acute pollution of Brahmani river and its tributaries. The reports had stated that several river side industries were releasing their waste water to the river while some other industries were dumping their industrial waste in the river. This had resulted in massive pollution in the inhabited areas alongside the river. Besides, there were also the reports that at some places, the river has been blocked due to dumping of huge quantities of industrial waste. Acting on the reports, a well-known intellectual, in a letter, had appealed the High Court to intervene in the matter and direct the state government to take urgent measures in this regard.

(Source-<http://odishasuntimes.com/44688/brahmani-pollution-hc-sends-suo-motu-notice-odisha-govt/>)

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