

# HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS UPDATE

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

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## **JSPL to set a pellet plant in Odisha with Rs 1400 crore investment**

NEW DELHI: Jindal Steel and Power today said it plans to set up a 7 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) pellet plant at Angul in Odisha with an investment of up to Rs 1,400 crore. "We are going to set up a pellet plant at Angul. We already have

the clearance from the state government to put up the plant," Jindal Steel and Power's (JSPL) Deputy Managing Director and CEO (Steel) [V R Sharma](#) told reporters here. "The investment for a pellet plant of 7 mtpa size varies somewhere between Rs 1,200-1,400 crore," he added. JSPL has a 4.5 mtpa pellet plant at [Barbil](#) in Odisha and is in the process of doubling the capacity. The additional 7 mtpa capacity would come as a part of its expansion project at Angul, where the company is expanding its steel-making capacity to 3.5 mtpa from 2.5 mtpa now. "The pellet plant will come with our second phase of expansion at Angul. We are going to put up blast furnace, another DRI, another coke oven battery at Angul. With that we are going to put up the pellet plant," Sharma said. The expansion work at Angul would start as soon as JSPL secures the financial closure for which it is in talks with the prospective banks. Sharma said JSPL was keen on adding value to the iron ore fines by setting up the pellet plant as in the areas closer to Angul plant, there is hardly any pelletisation taking place now. "Fines are available in plenty there, but people are not converting (fines) to pellets. So, we will happy to convert them (fines) into pellets," he said. Sharma said India currently has around 50 mtpa pellet capacity and with the ongoing expansions, it would go up to 70 mtps in the next five years. He also expressed hope that the capacity would go up to 120 mtpa by 2022.

(Source-[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-09-25/news/42394564\\_1\\_pellet-plant-angul-plant-steel-making-capacity](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-09-25/news/42394564_1_pellet-plant-angul-plant-steel-making-capacity))

## Lessons in human rights for Posco



A file photo of a protest against land acquisition for a proposed POSCO project in Bhubaneswar. Photo: PTI

Here's some gratuitous advice to [Posco](#) and its outreach managers in their ongoing enterprise to specifically counter accusations of human rights violations in Odisha. They could consider toning down their arrogance. And speaking certain untruths on behalf of the government of Odisha and India in order to protect its projects for a \$12 billion integrated steel plant, captive iron ore mines and a captive port. Take [Posco's](#) response when a top team of United Nations rapporteurs slammed into it for alleged human rights violations in a statement on 1 October. Among other things, the statement released by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights mentioned that "people in the project-affected area have reportedly been subjected to violence, harassment and intimidation, as well as arbitrary detentions and false charges, as a result of their activities to assemble peacefully and collectively defend their human rights". Posco said a few things well in a rebuttal issued several days later. "Posco agrees to the premise that

Posco does have responsibility to respect human rights even though the government has the primary duty to protect the human rights of the people". Then Posco blew it. "Posco squarely refutes the allegation that there is violation of human rights in its project area in Odisha." And then really blew it. "The highest level functionaries (the Indian Prime Minister and the Korean President) have often discussed and reviewed the project. In certain matters, the Supreme Court of India and the National Green Tribunal have also reviewed the project. Had there been any human right violation, it would not be possible that these functionaries and authorities would have simply ignored it. The authorities in India are very sensitive to human right issues. They do not need to be educated by or on behalf of certain vested interest people." This is an altogether bizarre and incorrect assertion to anyone with an understanding of human rights in India, and the nudges and winks that accompany the realpolitik practice. There is also well-documented evidence, in print, television and Internet archives, of Odisha police severely attacking protesters in and around the proposed site for Posco's steel plant, besides government ignoring *gram sabha* resolutions against the project. A tiny example. On 3 February, backed by police, a group of officials from the Industrial Development Corporation of Odisha (Idco) forcibly attempted to take possession of 700 acres of land that Posco needed at that time, in addition to the 2,000 acres already acquired on its behalf by Idco. A video of one such official beating protesters with a baton went viral. Police destroyed betel vines that day in the area of attack in the 700-acre acquisition zone, and even outside it. Men, women and children were roughed up—the most recent of several such incidents. Several owners of betel farms were compelled to accept compensation on the spot. The government of Odisha has a documented history of viciousness while acquiring or taking possession of land for industrial projects. And India's documented human rights violations, past and ongoing, by the central government and various state governments would keep interested courts busy for years. In Posco's response to another scathing report earlier this year, shepherded among others by a team at New York University's School of Law, this ironical paragraph on human rights issues leapt out. "...If the police do not act, who will protect the human rights of the local people? Their rights cannot be protected by someone seated in the UK and the USA and writing thesis on them. Posco has no role in maintaining the law and order. It is the duty and discretion of the govt." It is easy to understand Posco's anxious, vehement, and sometimes contradictory, denials of any human rights wrongdoing in its Odisha projects—even indirectly. The government of Odisha has done whatever it takes to facilitate the project for Posco, including violation of human rights committed by agencies of the state. By its repeated denial of such instances, and repeated, and public, shielding of the government's actions, Posco may actually be cementing complicity in such actions. Human rights watchdogs are already snapping at the heels of several suppliers and financiers of the project. Censure by portfolio investors would surely be unwelcome. Posco prides itself as being a signatory to the UN Global Compact. It would then be aware of the first two of 10 Compact principles: Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and Principle 2: Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

(Source-<http://www.livemint.com/Home-Page/raDI3jjiAVN3d69yE9M8CdL/Lessons-in-human-rights-for-Posco.html>)

## Odisha urged to finalize land rate, rehab package for Dulanga block

The Union power ministry has urged the Odisha government to expedite finalization of land rates and rehabilitation package for the Dulanga coal block awarded to NTPC. The ministry pointed out that as the decision on the two key milestones of coal mining is still pending at the state government level since September 2010, NTPC could not initiate work on developing the block. The Dulanga coal block is crucial for NTPC's MW super thermal power plant proposed at Darlipalli in western Odisha's Sundargarh district. NTPC hopes to commission its 1600 (2x800) MW super thermal power plant by 2018. Of 1274.9 acres private land needed for the power project's main plant, the state government has issued possession certificate for 1205.79 acres. Alienation proposals for 339.49 acres of government land are in different stages of processing. The maharatna firm needed 1652 acres of land for this power station, the cost of which has been estimated at Rs 12850.07 crore. Notification under Section 4 (1) of Land Acquisition Act has been issued for 32.36 acres of private land required for rehabilitation & resettlement colony. Moreover, administrative approval has been issued for acquisition of 55 acres private land for the Merry Go Round (MGR) system. The Darlipalli super thermal power project will draw water from the Hirakud reservoir in the Mahanadi river. NTPC has secured coal linkage for this project in the form of Dulanga coal block with mine capacity of seven million tonnes per annum (mtpa) under command area of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) and Pakri Barwadih block in Bihar's Hazaribagh district with 12.5 million tonne per annum (mtpa). Odisha will get 50% power from the Darlipalli super thermal plant. NTPC has also committed to establish a medical college near Sundergarh. NTPC is also building another 1600 MW power plant at Gajamara in Dhenkanal district. For this project, notification under Section 4 (1) of Land Acquisition Act has been

re-issued on June 20, 2012 for 796.33 acres of private land for main plant and township. NTPC will set up a power engineering institute at Dhenkanal that is linked to its Gajamara plant.

(Source-[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/odisha-urged-to-finalize-land-rate-rehab-package-for-dulanga-block-113093000235\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/odisha-urged-to-finalize-land-rate-rehab-package-for-dulanga-block-113093000235_1.html))

## **UN rights experts urge to halt POSCO project in Odisha over human rights violations**

The construction of a mega steel plant in Odisha should be halted immediately, UN independent rights experts have urged, citing serious human rights concerns. The project reportedly threatens to displace over 22,000 people in Jagatsinghpur district, and disrupt the livelihood of many thousands more in the surrounding area, a statement said. "The construction of a massive steel plant and port in Odisha by multinational steel corporation POSCO must not proceed as planned without ensuring adequate safeguards and guaranteeing that the rights of the thousands of people are respected," the group of eight experts stressed. While India has the primary duty to protect the rights of those whose homes and livelihood are threatened by the project, the experts underlined that "POSCO also has a responsibility to respect human rights". They said that South Korea, where POSCO is based, "should also take measures to ensure that businesses based in its territory do not adversely impact human rights when operating abroad". "Forced evictions constitute gross violations of human rights," said the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, Raquel Rolnik. "(It) may only be carried out in exceptional circumstances and in a manner consistent with human rights law, including after a genuine consultation, without leaving people homeless or vulnerable to further human rights violations," he said. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, warned that the forcible removal of people from their lands could be tantamount to depriving them of their means of subsistence. "People who would be evicted for the POSCO project have relied on their lands for generations in order to obtain adequate food and sustain themselves and their families," he said.

## **Niyamgiri setback: Odisha govt should give us alternate mine, says Vedanta**

New Delhi: Vedanta Resources today said it has sought an alternate bauxite mine from Odisha government to run its Lanjigarh alumina refinery, which is staring at uncertain future due to local tribals rejecting the proposal to carry out mining in the Niyamgiri hills. "We want very strongly that the state government, the Central government take on priority to give us the alternate bauxite (mine) as early as possible. That is very important," Vedanta Chairman Anil Agarwal told reporters here after delivering a lecture in local Shri Ram College of Commerce. Vedanta. Reuters. The Rs 5,000 crore alumina refinery is first project among various businesses of Vedanta that has failed to take off. Since inception, the 1 million tonne refinery and its proposed long-term bauxite source — mining in the Niyamgiri hills — have been in the midst of controversies as the local tribals are opposed to the two projects. During July-August this year, 12 gram sabhas, selected by the Odisha government for the referendum on mining in Niyamgiri hills, had rejected the proposal. They were selected after a Supreme Court order of April 18, in which it had directed the Odisha government to conduct meetings of gram sabhas for deciding whether mining will impact the religious, community and cultural rights of the villagers, especially their right to worship Niyam Raja, their deity. Their rejection has led to an uncertain future for the refinery as it does not have any long term source of bauxite, which is the most important raw material in producing alumina — the intermediate product used in making aluminium. Currently, the refinery is running at 40 per cent capacity which has led to Vedanta importing alumina so

that the company can run its 0.5 MT smelter in nearby Jharsuguda. However, Agarwal said imports of alumina can't be done on a long term basis and the company needs an alternate mine to run the Lanjigarh refinery. "You can not make our country import-based economy. We have all the resources, how can you import everything. How can you do that," he said. Vedanta Aluminium – a group firm of Vedanta which operates the refinery – has been sourcing bauxite from other states like Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh to run the alumina refinery. It needs 3 MT bauxite to run the 1 MTPA refinery. In the past two years, Vedanta has applied for 26 other bauxite deposits in Odisha after it sensed stiff opposition by the locals and civil rights group against mining in the Niyamgiri Hills. It has also been eyeing three Laterite mines, which is a minor mineral and has properties some what similar to bauxite, for running the Lanjigarh refinery. The mines are in Rayagada district. Vedanta has invested about Rs 50,000 crore in Odisha in the aluminium sector.

(source-[http://www.firstpost.com/business/niyamgiri-setback-odisha-govt-should-give-us-alternate-mine-says-vedanta-1192497.html?utm\\_source=ref\\_article](http://www.firstpost.com/business/niyamgiri-setback-odisha-govt-should-give-us-alternate-mine-says-vedanta-1192497.html?utm_source=ref_article))

## Niyamraja's subjects won't bow to Vedanta

The battle is won but celebrations are awaited - that sums up the mood of tribals who unanimously rejected the plan to mine bauxite on Odisha's Niyamgiri hills during the course of 12 gram sabhas held here recently. Celebrations, of course, will happen when Congress scion, Rahul Gandhi, who anointed himself as the "sepoy of Niyamgiri tribals in Delhi" at a public meeting here in 2008, visits the area again shortly. "A delegation of 50 people from four blocks went to Delhi last month and briefed Rahul Gandhi about the outcome of the gram sabhas. He has promised us to visit Niyamgiri soon to celebrate our victory," said Kumuti Majhi, president of Niyamgiri Surakhya Samiti, agitating against the mining project. It is one and half months since the gram sabhas ended. And, the villagers who participated in the referendum are still as resilient against the project as they were on the eve of the gram sabhas.

### Abode

### of Niyamraja

"We will not allow mining to happen on Niyamgiri hills", Majhi said and went on to justify, "The hill is not only the abode of our sacred deity Niyamraja but also the source of our livelihood." Interestingly, though the Supreme Court had ordered the holding of gram sabhas to decide, if the tribals' right to worship Niyamraja at Hundaljali, a hilltop in the Niyamgiri range, be affected by taking up mining activity 10 km away at Niyam Dangar, the tribals consider the entire 250 sq km spread of the Niyamgiri hill range straddling the two districts of Kalahandi and Rayagada as sacred to their religious belief. "We are not aware of any Hundaljali. Our Niyamraja sits on Niyam Dangar where mining will be done," said Ratu Sikaka of Phuldumer village.

### Fears

### over

### livelihood

But more than the concern over sacrilege of their religious belief, 8,000 Dongaria Kondhs and other tribes living on the slopes of the hill range are worried over the loss of livelihood if mining is taken up there. Apart from being home to many varieties of fruit-bearing trees, the hill slopes provide thousands of acres of free agriculture land on which the tribals have claimed their ownership according to the Forest Rights Act. In the absence of any structured land holding, tribals are ploughing on as much land as they can, to farm paddy, pulses, vegetables and spices. "I produce enough to meet the needs of my 18-member family throughout the year and sell the surplus grain, vegetables and spices in the local market to earn Rs 2,000 every week," says Labanya Gouda of Ijurupa village, who is cultivating on 70 acres on the hill slope. Supported by such a self-sustaining economy and various assistance received from different government welfare schemes, tribals with limited materialist needs and unexposed to industrialisation, do not see any benefit from Vedanta's alumina plant or the mining project. Rather, they consider these activities a threat to their status quo. "The mining will dry up the perennial streams coming down from the hills and irrigating our land throughout the year," Gouda said. The Vedanta Aluminium (VAL) authorities, however, discard these fears, citing the studies done by Central Mine Planning and Design Institute, a Coal India unit and Wildlife Institute of India. "There will be no impact on the streams according to the reports of these institutions,"

said a VAL official. Meanwhile, scepticism of local villagers over getting jobs in the project has further fuelled opposition against it. "Though I had lost 27 decimal land for Vedanta's alumina refinery, I have not got a job. With the company not offering any direct job, I had approached the contractors for a job, but was disappointed when they asked for bribes," says Sada Nayak of Kendubaradi village. But such allegations are refuted by VAL. "Of 3,000 people working in our plant (600 permanent employees and the rest contractual jobs), nearly 80 per cent are locals," pointed out an officer of the company. But locals, as defined by the official includes the entire state, not just the villages in the vicinity of the project.

(Source-[http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/niyamraja-s-subjects-won-t-bow-to-vedanta-113100800014\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/niyamraja-s-subjects-won-t-bow-to-vedanta-113100800014_1.html))

## **POSCO asked to halt \$12 billion Odisha project by UN panel**

New Delhi: In another jolt to South Korean steel giant POSCO, a UN Human Rights panel today asked it to immediately halt the \$12-billion mega port-to-steel plant project in Odisha alleging possible displacement of thousands of people and disruption in their livelihoods. "Construction of a mega-steel plant in Odisha in Eastern India should be halted immediately...The project reportedly threatens to displace over 22,000 people in the Jagatsinghpur district, and disrupt the livelihoods of many thousands more in the surrounding area," United Nations independent human rights experts have said. Protests against land acquisition, coupled with regulatory hurdles have kept the proposed plant- billed as the largest FDI or foreign direct investment in India, pending for the last eight years. The construction of the massive steel plant and port in Odisha by POSCO must not proceed as planned without ensuring adequate safeguards and assuring that the rights of the thousands of people are respected, the UN panel said. The "urgent call" follows a report by the rights group in June, which said land acquisitions have threatened to displace 22,000 people and deprive thousands of their existence. "People should not be impoverished in the name of development; their rights must take precedence over potential profits," stressed the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepulveda. "Projects such as these, with such a large potential impact on the rights of people living in poverty, must not go ahead without the meaningful participation, consent and involvement of the community affected," Sepulveda added. The POSCO project requires 4,004 acres of land of which the Odisha government had said it had already acquired 2,700 acres of land and handed over 1,700 acres to the steel giant. "Another 1,000 acres is likely to be handed over to us soon, sufficient to commence work on the first phase of the project but we are awaiting revalidation of the environment clearance," a POSCO official said.

He, however, refused to comment on the UN panel report, saying they have still to go through any such report. POSCO in July had pulled out of the \$6 billion project in Karnataka amid delays in land acquisition and other hurdles. The company has plans to commission Phase 1 of the project in 2018 while officials said phase II would be completed three years after completion of Phase I, and Phase III will be commissioned within three years after Phase II. The state government had signed an MoU or Memorandum of Understanding with the South Korean company in 2005 for the 12 MTPA (million tonnes per annum) steel facility. The project will include iron ore mine development over 30 years (total 600 million tonnes) at captive mines located in the Keonjhar and Sundergarh districts of Odisha, as well as development of related infrastructure. The developments come at a time when steel ministry is pursuing the case of revalidation of environment clearance for the project with the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF). The project is awaiting the MoEF's nod as without revalidation of environment clearance, POSCO will not be able to start work. POSCO was granted environment clearance for its project in 2007. On March 30, last year, the environment clearance granted to POSCO's steel project was suspended by the green tribunal which had directed the MoEF to review the clearance afresh. After reviewing the same, the clearance for the steel plant was recommended for revalidation till 2017 by the Expert Appraisal Committee in May. Meanwhile the UN panel has said that while India has the primary duty to protect the rights of those whose homes and livelihoods are threatened by the project, POSCO also has a responsibility to respect human rights, and Korea, where POSCO is based, should also take measures to ensure that businesses based in its territory do not adversely impact human rights when operating abroad. "Forced

evictions constitute gross violations of human rights," said the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, Raquel Rolnik. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter said, "People who would be evicted for the POSCO project have relied on their lands for generations in order to obtain adequate food and sustain themselves and their families." They also urged POSCO to exercise human rights due diligence throughout all stages of their activities, to ensure meaningful consultations with potentially affected stakeholders, to carry out a human rights impact assessment and to act on and incorporate its findings into the project operations.

(Source-<http://profit.ndtv.com/news/corporates/article-posco-asked-to-halt-12-billion-odisha-project-by-un-panel-327988>)

## Uncle held for rape, murder of girl

Barpali police have solved the murder mystery of Plus Three student of Barpali College whose body was found under mysterious circumstances in the outskirts of her village Barlabahal on Friday morning. Police have arrested the maternal uncle of the girl Girija Shankar Gahir alias Biju (25) of the village and forwarded him to court. The court remanded him in judicial custody after rejecting his bail plea. Speaking to mediapersons, DSP Amarendra Rana said Biju, who works as contractual electricity meter reading collector, waylaid the girl in forest of Rugdimunda near the village and raped her. When the girl threatened to disclose the incident to her family, the accused throttled her throat to death. The rape incident came to the fore after post-mortem. On Friday, the girl had left her home at around 7 am for some work. When she did not return till 9 am, her family went searching for her and found her lying dead in the forest nearby. Later, her uncle Benudhar Rout lodged complaint with the Barpali police who detained three persons - Sadananda Barik (20), Gajindra Bhoi (25) and Prasanna Bhoi (35) while two others including Biju Gahir and one Rohita Pandey, all from the same village and friends of Biju, are absconding. On the basis of information given by Sadananda, Gajindra and Prasanna, police arrested Biju on Saturday

(Source-<http://newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Uncle-held-for-rape-murder-of-girl/2013/09/29/article1809637.ece>)

## Odisha: Train runs over class VIII student in Dhenkanal –

**Dhenkanal (Odisha):** An eighth class student was run over and killed by Bhubaneswar-Rourkela inter-city express at an unmanned level crossing in Odisha's Dhenkanal district today, police said. The mishap took place near Mahadia in between Dhenkanal and Hindol Road section of the ECoR when the boy was crossing the railway track, a Government Railway Police (GRP) officer said. The deceased has been identified as Sagar Sethi (13) of nearby Kaunirapal villlage under Dhenkanal sadar police limits, the sources said.

(Source-[http://odishatoday.com/viewnews.php?news\\_id=5704#sthash.1JHlb4pE.dpuf](http://odishatoday.com/viewnews.php?news_id=5704#sthash.1JHlb4pE.dpuf))

## Health team to probe death of 8 newborns in Balangir hospital

A team of Health Department will visit the District Headquarters Hospital here on Friday to inquire into death of eight newborns, allegedly due to medical neglect, on Tuesday night. Chief District Medical Officer of Balangir on Thursday has sent a team of doctors to record the statements of parents of the newborns. According to hospital records, five newborns died at the Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) of the hospital due to asphyxiation, one due to septicaemia and two others had premature birth. The records stated that seven newborns died between 1.30 pm and 2.50 pm and another baby succumbed at 7 pm. Four babies were born in the hospital while the rest three were shifted from other health centres in a critical condition. The newborns belonged to Balangir, Nuapada and Sonapur districts. Treating doctors, however, refuted the allegation that there was any medical negligence. Additional District Medical Officer Manjubala Panda said the children were admitted to the SNCU in a critical condition which may have led to their death. "The SNCU is well-equipped and there were no lapses in the treatment. We will conduct a thorough inquiry into this," Panda said. Sources said the doctor in charge of the SNCU is on leave for a long time and at present, there is no one to look after the unit. Chief District Medical Officer Vikrant Kindo said all the eight newborns were in a critical condition and five of them had been referred to VSS

Medical College and Hospital. But their parents did not do so, he added. In July 19 this year, nine newborns had died in the SNCU of VSS Medical College and Hospital due to various reasons.

(Source-<http://newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Health-team-to-probe-death-of-8-newborns-in-Balangir-hospital/2013/10/25/article1854837.ece>)

## Negligence cry in boy's death

KORAPUT: A Class V student of Palsapada sevashram (residential school meant for SC and ST students) under Chandahandi block in Nabarangpur district died allegedly due to lack of medical treatment at the hostel on Sunday. The deceased was identified as Sukram Gond, 14. Alleging negligence on the part of sevashram authorities in treating the student, irate villagers blocked a road for several hours at Chandahandi, demanding suspension of at least three teachers. Sources said Gond was down with fever for past couple of days, but the hostel authorities allegedly overlooked the illness. "After having dinner he went to sleep on Saturday night but didn't wake up in the morning," a source said. "Had the boy been given medical attention on Saturday night then his life could have been saved," the source added. The sevashram has Class from I to VIII with around 300 students. District welfare officer Mukund Nihal, who rushed to the spot to pacify the agitating villagers, said, "From preliminary inquiry it was found that the boy had not complained of any illness. Nonetheless, inquiry will be conducted against the three teachers against whom the villagers have brought charges of negligence. Anyone found guilty will not be spared." After getting assurance of action from the administration, the villagers lifted the road blockade around 1 pm. "Autopsy of the body was done and he was cremated. The administration provided financial assistance of Rs 10,000 to conduct funeral rites," Nihal said.

(source-[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-10-07/bhubaneswar/42793541\\_1\\_negligence-cry-sevashram-villagers](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-10-07/bhubaneswar/42793541_1_negligence-cry-sevashram-villagers))

## Man detained for molesting maid at home

BHUBANESWAR: Police detained a medicine representative on charges of molesting his maid at his house at Laxmisagar here on Tuesday. The alleged incident took place when his wife was home. Laxmisagar police detained him after receiving a complaint from the maid, who had been working at his house for the past three months. The case was later referred to the Mahila Police for investigation. The accused stayed in a flat in an apartment near Kalpana Square. "Around 5 pm, she came to work. She alleged that man was drunk and molested her. She managed to escape," IIC of Laxmisagar police station K C Mund said. After coming out of the apartment, she raised an alarm. Locals allegedly beat up the medicine representative and handed him over to police. Scores of inhabitants of a slum, where the maid stays, gheraoed the Laxmisagar police station and demanded action against the accused.

(Source-[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-10-09/bhubaneswar/42861599\\_1\\_molesting-maid-police-station-alleged-incident](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-10-09/bhubaneswar/42861599_1_molesting-maid-police-station-alleged-incident))

## Dowry harassment: Maintenance case filed against ex-minister's son

• Photos



Rajashree Mohanty and Barsa Swony Choudhury (File/Express)

In a significant development in the sensational dowry harassment case of Barsa Swony Choudhury (23) in which a former minister of Odisha and his family members were arrested earlier this year, a maintenance case has been filed in the Balasore family court against the woman's husband Rajashree Mohanty. Rajashree, his father, former minister and BJD MLA from Basta Raghunath Mohanty and mother Pritilata Mohanty are now on condition bail. They were arrested following the dowry torture allegation by Barsa, a resident of Bhoisahi here, in Balasore town police station on March 14. Barsa's counsel Amar Ballav Nanda confirmed that a maintenance case seeking Rs 60,000 per month towards her study and other expenditures had been filed. The petition was lodged on the basis of the claims made by the Mohanty family while obtaining the conditional bail from the court of District and Sessions judge of Balasore. "They had submitted a pay slip of a private company where Rajashree claimed to have been working and it was mentioned that he was drawing Rs 1,65,000 per month. Besides, they denied to have demanded dowry citing that Rajashree was earning Rs 10 lakh more per annum from his hotel business and landed properties, apart from his salary. Basing on the claims, we have demanded Rs 60,000 per month towards maintenance," Nanda said adding that the case has been registered. Meanwhile, Barsa has been shifted to Bhubaneswar and studying MBA in HR and Finance in a private management college there. Her father Kishore Kumar Choudhury hoped the court would decide in their favour while granting the amount as per the legal provisions which would definitely help for her higher studies. Barsa said after the case was registered she has been staying along with her parents and depending on her father's income. "I require more money for my higher studies. That's why I have filed the maintenance case and the money I expect to get will meet my study expenses," she added. While after the incident, Raghunath had to lose his ministerial berth and the vice-president post of BJD, the ruling party too lost miserably in the recently concluded Jaleswar NAC election. Incidentally, Raghunath was projecting his son as the party's candidate from Jaleswar constituency in 2014 Assembly polls. Earlier, Barsa had moved the High Court, seeking cancellation of bail granted to her husband Rajashree and father-in-law by the lower courts. In her petition, she had alleged that Raghunath and Rajashree had violated the conditions imposed on them by the lower courts while granting bail. Rajashree however could not be contacted for comment. His counsel Niranjana Panda told media persons that Rajashree lost his job after his arrest and he had no such hotel business. "When he earns nothing, how can he pay such a huge amount? However, we are yet to receive the notice. We would fight the case accordingly," he added.

(Source-<http://newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Dowry-harassment-Maintenance-case-filed-against-ex-ministers-son/2013/09/28/article1808474.ece>)

## School cook kills self, alleges rape in note

KORAPUT: A cook of Navodaya Vidyalaya-1 at Malkangiri allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself on Wednesday. In her suicide note, the deceased, Manguli Duruka, 28, has accused a peon of raping her which forced her to take the extreme step. "The school authorities informed us around 8 pm and the body was recovered from a hostel room an hour later. We had to break open the door as it was locked from inside," IIC of Malkangiri police station F M Kiro said. Going by preliminary inquiry, the officer said, "Though the deceased has alleged that she was raped, circumstantial evidence doesn't support it. Things will be clear after we receive the autopsy report." "On suspicion, we have detained the peon but he is denying the charges," he added. Police said the cook from Malkangiri's Padmagiri village allegedly killed herself in the hostel as all students were away celebrating Gandhi Jayanti. "After the function, when the school authorities searched for the cook to serve dinner to the students, they found her body hanging," the officer said. Police also interrogated a younger brother and sister of the deceased staying at Malkangiri. "They denied having any knowledge of the incident," he added. SP (Malkangiri) Akhileswar Singh said, "Though in the suicide note the deceased has not mentioned when she was raped, medical examination of the accused will be carried out. We are also verifying the handwriting of the deceased to ascertain whether the letter was written by her or not."

(source-[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-10-04/bhubaneswar/42716039\\_1\\_suicide-note-malkangiri-hostel-room](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-10-04/bhubaneswar/42716039_1_suicide-note-malkangiri-hostel-room))

## Woman killed over witchcraft suspicion in Odisha

Rourkela: A 55-year-old woman was hacked to death by a youth who suspected her of practicing black magic on him in Odisha's Sundergarh district, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place at Kardakuda village under Bonai Police Station area yesterday. The victim has been identified as Masuri Munda, a tribal. The police arrested Nayak Munda (28) who allegedly committed crime in highly intoxicated condition. The accused was under the impression that he suffered due to the black magic being done by the woman.

Nayak Munda last evening accused the victim of using black magic against him. They had an altercation before Nayak picked up his axe and killed Masuri. She died on the spot following which he fled from the scene. "We caught Nayak today from his house and have seized the weapon used in the killing," said R Panigrahi, Sub-Divisional Police Officer, Bonai.

(source-[http://zeenews.india.com/news/odisha/woman-killed-over-witchcraft-suspicion-in-odisha\\_883662.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/odisha/woman-killed-over-witchcraft-suspicion-in-odisha_883662.html))

## Rights body seeks report

BHUBANESWAR: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought an action taken report from DGP Prakash Mishra in connection with the alleged police atrocities on two siblings, Treshant Meher and Prashant Meher, on September 2. As per the complaint with NHRC, SP (Bargarh) Anoop Krishna verbally abused them and his men hit them with their guns and kicked them when they had come to a grievance redressal cell of district collector Bhabagrahi Mishra alleging police inaction into the murder of their father Lalit Meher. Lalit was murdered on September 19.

(Source-[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-10-08/bhubaneswar/42827970\\_1\\_rights-body-nhrc-police-inaction](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-10-08/bhubaneswar/42827970_1_rights-body-nhrc-police-inaction))

## 'A conspiracy of silence against Dalit victims'

In Gujarat's Mehsana district, Dalits cannot sell milk to cooperatives as it comes from 'Dalit' cows; in Rajasthan's Ajmer, a Dalit woman is branded a witch, beaten and ostracised from the village; in Orissa's Kandhamal, a Dalit girl was trafficked for sex and in Haryana, minor Dalit girls are gang raped every other day by dominant or upper caste men. Each time these victims of caste atrocities tried to register a complaint, they were threatened, coerced and counter cases were slapped against not only them but also

civil society organisations and lawyers working with them. Medical reports of rape survivors were routinely fudged and the police refused to register appropriate FIRs. The violence committed on Dalit women's bodies was gruesome, to say the least. These facts came to light when victims of 45 such cases, mostly Dalit women from nine States across the country, deposed before an eight-member jury of a National tribunal over two days in the Capital. After listening to the cases, jury member Farah Naqvi, National Advisory Council said these stories were a wake up call. "I would be terrified to fight the battles these women have taken up. Let's not tiptoe around this or try to be polite; we are a casteist society, deeply embedded in caste, class and community structures. We have to say loudly and without shame that our police, institutions and administration are casteist. If you are casteist, keep your poison to yourself. Do not poison your profession with it. The bottom line has to be accountability and we need to first fix it. Then begins the longer battle of ridding our society of casteism," she said. Lawyer Henri Tiphagne of the People's Watch, another jury member, spoke about the conspiracy of silence that officials, medical personnel, public prosecutors practiced. He said their combined callousness and nexus marginalised and pushed all these victims to the periphery. In the context of the discourse around rape in the country, he said it was important to take cognisance of the fact that violence against Dalit women was of a 'special' kind. There is wanton negligence of officials at all levels— right from constabulary to superintendent— and there has been a failure of proper implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, said Asha Kowtal of All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch. "The SC/ST Act should undergo a change to take into account new forms of discrimination that are coming up: in NREGA, health facilities, contracts, tenders and land distribution. Dalit Christians in Kandhamal are unable to take recourse to the Act and they must be brought within its ambit. National and State human rights institutions are either insensitive or don't have resources to take up these cases," said Henri, adding that the law proceeds as if the victim does not exist. "There needs to be proper rehabilitation and relocation of victims in halfway homes." P. Sivakami, writer and activist from Tamil Nadu, pointed out that most victims were vulnerable in deep-rooted poverty and landlessness and said they should be socially and economically empowered to be able to fight against these atrocities. "The landless are meek victims and the landed also suffer from psychological barriers which make them feel superior to the landless. How are we going to reform them?" she asked. The tribunal was organised by AIDMAM. Other jury members were advocate Vrinda Grover, co-founder of Human Rights Law Network Gayatri Singh, Prof Vimal Thorat, general secretary NCDHR Srivella Prasad and Vidyanand Vakil, chairperson Bihar State Commission for SCs.

(source-<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/a-conspiracy-of-silence-against-dalit-victims/article5190865.ece>)

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