

Second phase of Ratna Bhandar inventory begins

HANS NEWS SERVICE
PURI

THE second phase of the inventory of the Puri Jagannath temple's Ratna Bhandar commenced on Wednesday, officials said. A selected team of servitors, gemologists and goldsmiths entered the sacred treasury at 11.30 am, along with Ratna Bhandar Committee chairman Justice Biswanath Rath, and Shree Jagannath Temple Administration's Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee.

The inventory exercise, the first in 48 years, had begun on March 25 for the daily-use ornaments of the deities. "During the first phase, the entire process was documented through videography, photography, and 3D mapping to ensure transparency. A digital catalogue of the daily-use ornaments was prepared and stored in separate 'sindhukas' (treasure chests), categorised by metal



type," Padhee said. The current phase focuses on the Bahar Ratna Bhandar, where festival ornaments and jewellery are stored. Justice Rath said this inventory includes the famous 'Suna Bhesa' (golden attire) ornaments used on the chariots and four

other occasions. According to the 1978 list, the treasury holds 111 items, comprising 78 gold-mixed articles and 33 silver-mixed jewellery pieces. The inventory will continue until April 11, with subsequent sessions on April 13 and from April 16 to 18,

Padhee said. He said the temple rituals will continue uninterrupted, and devotees will have 'darshan' from the 'Bahara Katha' (outer barricade) for security reasons. The inventory is being done as per the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) set by

the State government. The SOP divides storage into three categories -- the first category covers the inner chamber where the ornaments have been stored for centuries, the second one includes festival ornaments stored in the outer chamber, and the third category consists of daily-use items. While the third category was inventoried on March 25, the current exercise is for the second category ornaments, as the items currently adorned by the deities could not be counted earlier. Elaborate security measures have been made by the district police in view of the exercise, officials said. The measures include strict access control, multi-layered security, deployment of striking forces at key locations, and standby teams of executive magistrates, fire services, medical staff, and anti-sabotage units, they said.

CM launches projects worth Rs 40K cr

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Wednesday launched 36 industrial projects worth Rs 40,811 crore, which are expected to generate 59,000 jobs, officials said. Of the 36 projects, Majhi inaugurated 11 industrial units and laid foundation stones for 25 others in the presence of senior officials and industry leaders.

The projects span sectors including green energy equipment, metal and downstream industries, textiles and apparel, plastics, tourism, agriculture and food processing, defence manufacturing, IT, automobiles, and cement. Before launching the projects, the Chief Minister held a round-table with leading industrialists from across the country and assured them of all necessary facilities -- land, power, water, connectivity, and timely approvals.

"We have a dedicated team to facilitate industries to set up their projects in the State. If there is any difficulty, the



industries may directly take up the matter with the Chief Minister's Office for immediate resolution," Majhi told industrialists and urged them to expand existing units in the State and help grow small-scale industries around their projects.

Addressing a public meeting at Bhuinpur near Begenia in Khurda district, Majhi asserted that Odisha is no longer merely a "State of potential" but is now actively experiencing the touch of prosperity. "This is a new and significant chapter in the golden journey of 'Samrudha Odisha'," he said.

Majhi highlighted that in the last 18-20 months, the government has laid founda-

tions and inaugurated 109 projects worth nearly Rs 2.5 lakh crore, creating 1,76,000 jobs. In a post on X, the CMO said, "A new chapter has been added to Odisha's industrial landscape. Reiterating the State government's commitment to providing all kinds of administrative support to industrialists along with further strengthening the industrial infrastructure in the State, the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri @MohanMOdisha has laid the foundation stone and inaugurated 36 industrial projects worth Rs 40,811 crore at Bhubaneswar, Khordha. These projects have created a new chapter of employment opportunities for over 59,000 people."

NIA seeks transfer of blast probe

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

THE NIA formally requested the Odisha Police to hand over the investigation into the blast here in January, which left two persons dead, officials said. The Central agency wrote to Police Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh, seeking transfer of the case for a detailed probe into a possible terror angle behind the explosion that took place at Azad Nagar in the Airfield police station area on January 27.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) intends to examine possible links to larger criminal networks and ascertain whether high-grade explosives such as RDX were used in the blast. The Bhu-



baneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate Police, which is currently investigating the case, had earlier said four persons were injured when prime suspect Shahnawaz Malik (26), a history-sheeter, was allegedly assembling an explosive device on the rooftop of a rented house. Malik and a woman identified as Lizatun Bibi later succumbed to their burn injuries, while two others survived, the po-

lice said. Investigators had seized materials, including explosive residues, from the site. "Though it is suspected that Malik might have used high-grade explosive material, it was yet to be confirmed whether RDX was used," an officer said. An NIA team had visited the blast site in January and examined forensic evidence and CCTV footage as part of preliminary inquiry.

WOS unveils S R Nayak's 'Cosmic Symphony'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

'COSMIC Symphony', a book written by London-based management expert and Harvard and Oxford alumnus Smruti Ranjan Nayak, was launched at a glittering ceremony in Delhi.

Distinguished guests from New Delhi and National Capital Region attended the launch ceremony hosted by the World Odisha Society (WOS) on the premises of Shree Jagannath temple at Hazu Khas.

As a renowned author and general secretary of World Odisha Society's UK Chapter, Smruti Ranjan



Nayak is acclaimed for best-selling books like "Battlefield to Boardroom"

and "CRM - Creating Revenue Mechanism". Delivering the welcome

address, World Odisha Society Chairman Kishore Dwivedi praised author Nayak for using his book "Cosmic Symphony" to sensitise young minds toward holistic growth. Dwivedi said this book will empower children everywhere to disconnect from mobile devices and explore their inner lives.

At the launch, Nayak remarked that "Cosmic Symphony" is more than a book; it is an exploration of the mysteries found both "within ourselves and in the world around us." Once children begin to understand their inner selves, the world will naturally open up to them, Nayak added.



Budget key to Odisha's long-term growth: Majhi

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has said that the State budget is not merely a statement of income and expenditure, but a strong roadmap for the State's overall development and the realisation of each citizen's dreams. While inaugurating a State-level budget awareness drive, "Ama Janiba, Ama Budget" on Tuesday, Majhi said in compliance with the nation's vision, the State government has set the targets to be achieved by 2047.

The targets include raising per capita income from Rs 1.8 lakh to Rs 32 lakh, enhancing the overall quality of life, reducing multidimensional poverty to just 5 per cent, increasing women's workforce participation to 70 per cent, extending life expectancy beyond 80 years, and eradicating anaemia and malnutrition.

The Chief Minister also said the 2026-27 State budget will act as a strong foundation for achieving the vision of a "Prosperous Odisha". This year's budget introduced 31 new initiatives, including several programmes and schemes. A total outlay of Rs 3.10 lakh crore has been proposed, with a strong focus on capital expenditure. The current budget is 7 per cent higher than the previous year's estimates.

The State government has set a target to transform Odisha into a \$500 billion economy by 2036 and a \$1.5 trillion economy by 2047. He asserted that while the goal may seem ambitious, the people of Odisha have the capability to achieve it with the blessings of Lord Jagannath. Budget for 2026-27 financial year includes special measures for rural development, employment generation, and addressing migration issues, he added. Notably, this budget awareness campaign will be organised across the State from April 1 to 14, to ensure wider public participation and awareness. Majhi said that the budget reflects Odisha's pride and prosperity and, with collective efforts, will transform the State into a major economic powerhouse of the country.

Token lapses prevent farmers from selling paddy

SUNIL MOHAN PATNAIK
BERHAMPUR

IN a distressing turn of events that has shaken the agrarian heartland, nearly 3,000 genuine farmers are unable to sell the paddy they worked so hard to harvest due to a deeply flawed token issuance system. What should have been a season of reward has instead turned into a saga of anguish and injustice.

As golden fields bowed with the weight of ripe harvests, hope blossomed in the hearts of farmers. Yet, that hope was cruelly crushed when the much-needed procurement tokens, essential for selling paddy, failed to reach them. The invisible walls of a faulty system rose high, locking thousands out of the marketplace.

While lakhs of farmers successfully navigated the procurement process,



these 3,000 cultivators found themselves trapped in a web of administrative lapses and questionable survey methods. A controversial satellite survey, reportedly conducted in haste, declared several fertile fields as non-cultivated lands, stripping farmers of their rightful eligibility without

even a word of consultation. The irony cuts deep. After layers of official verification and field inspections, the fate of these farmers was overturned by a remote assessment, leaving them voiceless and vulnerable. Repeated appeals to authorities echoed into silence, as the token sys-

tem remained unresponsive to their plight.

For many, the consequences have been devastating. Forced to sell their produce at throwaway prices to middlemen or let it lie unsold, the farmers now grapple with mounting losses and fading trust in the system meant to protect them.

Voices of protest are now rising like a storm across the fields, demanding accountability and justice. Rushikulya Rayat Mahasabha secretary Simanchal Nahak and other farmer organisations have called for an immediate probe into the irregularities, punishment for those responsible, and compensation for the losses suffered.

In the land where farming is not just an occupation but a way of life, the failure of a system has sown seeds of despair, leaving behind a bitter harvest of broken promises.

Cash, plots unearthed from engineer

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

THE Odisha Vigilance department on Wednesday unearthed multiple assets, including a farmhouse, a palatial building, high-value plots, and bank deposits exceeding Rs 60 lakh, during raids on a senior Irrigation department engineer, officials said. Acting on a tip-off, Vigilance sleuths conducted simultaneous searches at six locations linked to Rajesh Chandra Mohanty, currently serving as Additional Chief Engineer of Central Irrigation Circle.

During the operation, officials unearthed a triple-storied residential building at Baramunda Housing Board Colony in Bhubaneswar. A paternal house in Kolhasingh village of Jajpur district and a relative's residence in Deula Sahi, Jubilee Town in Dhenkanal district were also



searched. Raids were further conducted at Mohanty's office chamber in Bhubaneswar, where he serves as ACE (Dam Safety).

Additionally, a double-storied building and a farmhouse spread over approximately 1.71 acres along with another building measuring around 4,000 square feet at Bimbol in Dhenkanal district were inspected. The Vigilance teams also identified five high-value plots, including one in Bhubaneswar and four located in Bimbol and Bhapur areas of Dhenkanal district. Officials stated that the measurement and valu-

ation of the buildings, farmhouse and plots were carried out by the Vigilance Technical Wing.

The raids further led to the seizure of Rs 6.23 lakh in cash, deposits worth over Rs 60 lakh, gold ornaments, flight tickets valued at Rs 13.47 lakh, and two four-wheelers. The total value of assets is likely to increase as the search operation was still underway.

The operation involved a large team comprising one Additional SP, 11 DSP-rank officers, nine inspectors, eight ASIs, and other supporting staff.

Odisha tops AMRUT 2.0 implementation

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA emerged as a leading State in the country in the urban development sector, securing the first position for the successful implementation and service delivery under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0. AMRUT 2.0, which was launched in October 2021 and extended up to March 2027, aims to ensure universal water supply, rejuvenation of water bodies and improved urban infrastructure across

cities. According to an official statement, Odisha has emerged as a leading State by securing the first position in the entire country with the successful implementation of AMRUT 2.0. "In Odisha, the mission has witnessed significant progress across 89 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), with 345 projects approved at an estimated cost of Rs 4,030.18 crore, covering both water supply and waterbody rejuvenation initiatives," the State government said.

It also said that 99 projects under the AMRUT 2.0



scheme have already been completed in the State, while the remaining are progressing steadily across various stages of implementation. Odisha's

Housing and Urban Development department claimed that the State has achieved near-total utilisation of available funds, reflecting robust

financial planning and efficient project management.

Under AMRUT 2.0, Odisha has made notable strides in strengthening urban water infrastructure. Seven Water Treatment Plants with a combined capacity of 43 MLD have been commissioned, benefiting 2.83 lakhs of citizens. In addition, 24x7 water supply systems have been operationalised in key urban centres, alongside the provision of more than 2.7 lakh household water connections.

Overall, more than five lakh urban residents have directly benefited from these

interventions. Speaking on the achievement, Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said, "Securing the top rank under AMRUT 2.0 reflects Odisha's focused approach towards ensuring reliable water access and stronger urban infrastructure. Our priority is clear -- every household should have access to safe water, every city should have efficient systems and every ULB should be empowered to deliver better services. We will continue to build cities that are resilient, inclusive and future-ready,

aligned with the vision of a Viksit Odisha."

The department also noted that under "Pay Jal Survekshan" and "Jai Hi AMRUT" programmes, Odisha has secured incentives and is advancing projects for improved water management and reuse. Community-driven initiatives such as "AMRUT Mitra and Women for Tree" programmes have further strengthened environmental sustainability, with plantation drives and waterbody rejuvenation undertaken through women self-help groups.