

# CM unveils 3 grid substations to boost power supply

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday inaugurated three new grid substations and eight transmission lines established at Rs 600 crore, and assured the people of Bhubaneswar and adjoining areas of uninterrupted and high-quality power supply. He said the new power facilities will benefit about 22 lakh consumers in the region. Majhi launched the new grid substations at Balianata, Satyanagar, and SCB Medical College in Cuttack, in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister K V Singh Deo, who is also in charge of the Energy department and Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi. "These projects, which had been stalled for many years due to legal and technical issues, have been successfully completed by our government with firm resolve in just one year. Impossible becomes possible if there is a strong willpower," Majhi said.

He was addressing a public meeting held at Balianata and asserted that the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack will be connected by multiple feeder lines.

The Chief Minister also informed the people that the ongoing underground electricity line cabling



would further ensure an uninterrupted power supply even during cyclones and rainy season. In just one year, the State-owned Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL) has completed four major power projects, he said. "Out of these, the Nayapally Grid has started providing power since last year. That is why we have been able to complete the work of four grid sub-

stations in just one year," Majhi said. Noting that Bhubaneswar's power demand, which presently stands at around 1,000 MW, is projected to be doubled to 2,000 MW by 2030, the Chief Minister said Odisha's power system is being restructured in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Digital India vision. For the first time, a digital grid substation has been built in the State. Similarly, there

are plans to develop a 765 KV transmission system for the State capital.

Deputy Chief Minister K V Singh Deo said, "These new grid substations will act as fresh sources of power for Bhubaneswar and Balianata. People will no longer face low-voltage issues." On this occasion, the Chief Minister said that Rs 300 crore has been sanctioned for the restoration of the Prachi river, while Rs 75

crore has been approved for the second phase of the restoration of the Dhanua river in the Bhubaneswar-Jayadev area.

Along with this, Rs 170 crore has been approved for the restoration of the Daya river and Rs 400 crore for the restoration and improvement of the Daya West Canal under the Sanjeevani Yojana, and he announced that all the work will start soon.

# Retired officer surrenders after killing wife

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR

A retired government official was arrested by the Commissionerate Police on Wednesday for stabbing his wife to death at his residence at Swastik Nagar at Kuha village under Airfield police limits in Bhubaneswar.

The accused, Debaraj Sarangi, 62, a former senior accountant at the AG Office here, retired around two years ago. After his retirement, Sarangi, who originally hailed from Nayagarh district, was staying with his 55-year-old wife, Priyamvada, in Swastik Nagar area under the Airfield police station.

Police sources said on Wednesday, the couple got into a heated argument and scuffle after Sarangi, who was reportedly under mental stress, insisted on leaving the house, which his wife opposed. Meanwhile, in a sudden fit of rage, the accused first assaulted the victim with his fists and then attacked her with a knife on her face and neck multiple times, leading to her death.

After the incident, Sarangi handed over some cash and the victim's gold ornaments to his daughter, who was staying with her in-laws in Patrapada area of the city. Later, he went to Airfield police station and surrendered, confessing to the crime.

The couple's daughter, Arpita, told mediapersons that her father has been suffering from a liver infection for the past six months. His diabetes had also worsened recently, and he had been losing weight gradually. Worried that his condition might not improve, Sarangi remained under constant stress.

Arpita said she had tried to console her father and assured him that he would recover soon. The investigating officials also, during the investigation, ascertained that the accused had been suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, and liver-related ailments for a long time, and as a result, was experiencing severe mental depression.

The police sources further claimed that the investigation revealed that prior to the incident, Sarangi was reportedly under mental stress and suffering from insomnia, and in a sudden, aggressive state, committed the crime. Following his surrender and confession, Sarangi was arrested by the police and later produced before a court, which remanded him in judicial custody.



## Man kills wife, hangs self

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BERHAMPUR

A man killed his wife and then hanged himself from a tree in Ganjam district, police said on Tuesday. The deceased have been identified as Chitrasen Nayak (28), a labourer, and his wife Puja Naik (25), mother of two boys.

According to police, the couple had frequent domestic disputes, and a quarrel on Monday night reportedly escalated into violence. Chitrasen allegedly attacked Puja with a kitchen knife before taking his own life by hanging from a tree around 200 metres from their house.

Locals discovered his body on Tuesday morning. The incident took place at Saranupalli within Belaguntha police limits. Police sent the bodies for post-mortem examination at the sub-divisional hospital at Bhanjanagar.

"Initial investigation suggests the incident may have occurred due to a domestic dispute which escalated into violence," Bhanjanagar SDPO Deepak Mishra said. He said the couple had got married about seven years ago and were blessed with two boys aged six and four years.

# LAW TO CURB 'SLUR' ON SOCIAL MEDIA

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan on Wednesday said the State government was contemplating bringing legislation to curb the use of offensive and abusive language on social media, noting that these platforms were becoming "toxic media". "Those making vile comments on social media should refrain from doing so. Otherwise, the government will take strict action against them in the coming days," he said in a post on X.

He went on to say that it has been noticed that "social media is in the process of becoming toxic media" "Abusive language is being used in social media, and there are no restrictions on it. The proposed legislation will target obscene and abusive speech, ensuring accountability from those who misuse online platforms," the State Law Minister added.

Sources said the legislation being contemplated by the government will extend to public spaces, bringing the use of abusive language under regulatory scrutiny. The State Law Commission has sub-

mitted its recommendations to curb the rising misuse of social media.

While Odisha BJP's social media chief Umakant Patnaik backed Harichandan, saying there should be stringent legislation to stop social media misuse, the BJD's youth wing president Chinmay Sahu expressed worry that "the BJP may use this proposed law for political benefit and target political opponents". The Congress' student wing leader, Yasir Nawaz, alleged that it was the BJP leaders who used offensive words targeting their opponents on social media.

# Neradi issue will be resolved amicably: Min

SUNIL MOHAN PATNAIK  
BERHAMPUR

ODISHA Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan has affirmed that the long-standing Neradi project issue will be addressed through constructive dialogue with the Andhra Pradesh government. Emphasising cooperation over conflict, the minister announced the formation of a dedicated committee to steer the matter toward a meaningful resolution.

Speaking during his visit to Mohana block in Gajapati district, Harichandan highlighted that Neradi is not an isolated concern. Odisha, he said, is actively engaging with Andhra Pradesh on several crucial inter-state matters, including Vamsadhara, Kotia, and Polavaram. "The government remains fully alert and committed," he asserted, underlining a broader vision of harmony through negotiation.

Adding a cultural and spiritual note to his visit,



Harichandan attended the consecration ceremony of Hanuman temple at Manikpur Kesharinagar. After offering sacred oblations and performing rituals, he addressed a gathering of locals, blending governance with goodwill.

Promising a brighter horizon, Harichandan assured that all necessary steps would

be taken to accelerate development in the district. The event was attended by Digapahandi MLA Sidhant Mohapatra, Mohana MLA Dasarathi Gamang, and Gajapati Special Development Council Chairman Kamadeb Badanayak. The event thus turned into a confluence of faith, leadership and forward-looking commitment.

# NIA begins Bhubaneswar Jan blast probe

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BHUBANESWAR

THE National Investigation Agency (NIA) has begun its probe into a blast in Bhubaneswar in January that left two persons dead, officials said on Thursday. A three-member NIA team visited the Airfield police station here and collected documents, including FIRs and forensic reports, in connection with the blast that took place in Azad Nagar on January 27, a senior police officer said.

Investigators had visited the blast site in January, and examined forensic evidence and CCTV footage as part of a preliminary inquiry, he said. "As per the legal procedure, the case is being handed over to the NIA. Whatever documents they will ask for, we will provide to them," ACP (Zone 2), Bhubaneswar, Krushna Chandra Palei, told reporters here.

The Central agency had written to Police

Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh on Monday, seeking transfer of the case for a detailed probe into a possible terror angle behind the explosion, officials said. The 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 Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate Police 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 burn injuries, while two others survived, police said.

"Though it is suspected that Malik may have used some high-grade explosive material, it is yet to be confirmed whether that was RDX," the officer added.



# Anant Ambani pledges jobs for KISS students on his birthday

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR

TO mark his birthday on Thursday, Anant Ambani, scion of Mukesh Ambani family, announced a series of significant initiatives for students of KISS, notably offering employment opportunities in the Reliance Group. The announcement supports scholarships for KISS students this academic year and offers KG to PG toppers a learning visit to Vantara, a massive wildlife centre in Gujarat set up by Ambani. Significantly, 30 Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) graduates will be offered jobs every year across various companies of the Reliance Group, opening sustainable career pathways for tribal

youth. Further enhancing academic exposure, study materials for the current academic year were distributed to all students, strengthening their educational foundation. The announcements are expected to benefit thousands of students across different levels, contributing to their academic growth, skill development and future livelihood. As part his birthday celebration, KISS students organised a grand cake-cutting ceremony, prayers, and a special programme. Ambani hosted a special dinner for 40,000 tribal students, creating a festive and joyful atmosphere across the campus. Students formed a human display inspired by the Vantara logo to express

their heartfelt gratitude. They also offered prayers to Lord Jagannath for his good health, happiness and long life. The celebration was held under the guidance of KIIT and KISS Founder Achyuta Samanta, who conveyed his best wishes on the occasion. Samanta stated that the initiatives would greatly strengthen students' confidence and future prospects. He emphasised that such support holds deep significance for children coming from humble tribal backgrounds, helping open new doors of opportunity.

The event witnessed the presence of students, staff and members of the KISS community, making it a memorable occasion filled with joy, hope and aspiration.

# Sasmit Patra quits as BJD's Rajya Sabha leader

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR

SENIOR Biju Janata Dal leader Sasmit Patra has tendered his resignation from the post of Parliamentary Party leader of the BJD in the Rajya Sabha. The party supreme and former chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday accepted Patra's resignation. "President Biju Janata Dal Shri Naveen Patnaik has accepted the

resignation of Dr Sasmit Patra, MP, as leader of the BJD Parliamentary Party, Rajya Sabha, today," according to an official party statement.

Sources said some party MPs had recently demanded his removal from the post in a letter to the party president. Internal rift in the party has reportedly forced Patra to step down as BJD's Rajya Sabha leader. Patra, who is serving his second term in

the Rajya Sabha, has been the BJD's Parliamentary Party leader since 2022, after securing a second tenure in the Upper House.

Meanwhile, it is speculated that corporate honcho and Patnaik's political secretary, Santru Misra, who was elected to the Upper House in the recently concluded Rajya Sabha polls, may replace Patra as the BJD Parliamentary Party leader. It is pertinent here to

mention that a section of the regional party turned against Patra following the party's change of stance during the voting on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill at the last moment in April 2025.

The party, which had earlier announced that it would oppose the bill, voted in its support, triggering widespread discontent among a major section of the party, who launched a scathing

attack on Patra. They had also demanded stringent action against Patra for the flip-flop that left them embarrassed.

Patra, an academic-turned-politician and a two-term Rajya Sabha member from Odisha, has emerged as a prominent voice in Parliament on both national and regional matters. Serving as the BJD's national spokesperson, he has been the party's key

representative in New Delhi and has articulated its position in the Upper House on several important legislative issues.

Earlier this month, Patra had also resigned from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and IT, protesting remarks made by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey about the legendary Biju Patnaik. Dubey was the head of the committee.

