

Gate Bazaar flyover faces safety test

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BRAHMAPUR

AN expert nine-member technical team, led by Superintending Engineer Pinaki Prasad Swain of Brahmapur Quality Control Division, on Monday began a detailed inspection of the under-construction Gate Bazaar flyover following allegations of substandard construction work and use of inferior-quality materials.

The team, comprising the Superintending Engineer, SDO, JE and other technical personnel, inspected various components of the flyover and began collecting samples of construction materials, including cement and steel. The team is also inspecting the dimensions and specifications of different structural components to ascertain whether the work conforms to prescribed technical standards.

The inspection follows a letter written by Brahmapur MP Pradip Panigrahi to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on July 25, seeking an expert-level investigation into the



alleged use of low-quality construction materials and the delay in completion of the flyover.

Panigrahi had alleged that inferior-quality cement, steel and other materials were being used in the project and that managerial difficulties were contributing to delays. The prolonged construction work has also been causing considerable traffic congestion in Gate Bazaar and affecting the business activities of local traders.

Speaking during the inspection, SE Pinaki Prasad Swain said the technical investigation would take a few days. "We are collecting samples from every pillar and slab and inspecting the dimensions of the various components used in the flyover. The samples will

be tested and evaluated as per prescribed procedures. The findings will be compiled and a report will be submitted to the State government," he said.

The technical scrutiny has now put the quality and progress of the much-awaited project under close examination, with all eyes on the findings of the expert committee.

The 1,136-metre-long flyover, connecting Niladri Vihar on Aska Road with the City Hospital Old Gate, is intended to ease traffic congestion in one of Brahmapur's busiest stretches. The project was formally inaugurated on August 29, 2025, while actual construction commenced on January 15, 2025.

INDIA bloc calls Odisha bandh on Oct 8

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

INDIA bloc on Tuesday announced an Odisha bandh on October 8 to demand the repeal of the new mining law and two other issues, as members of the alliance staged a demonstration near Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's residence here. Hundreds of workers and leaders of bloc partners such as the Congress, CPI(M), CPI, CPI(ML) Liberation, Forward Bloc, NCP, Samajwadi Party and RJD took part in the rally.

The protesters had earlier planned to gherao the Assembly but shifted their focus to the Chief Minister's residence after the monsoon session was adjourned sine die a day earlier. "The BJP government adjourned the Assembly sine die instead of answering our questions on the MMDR Bill, 'vote chori' and CEC Gyanesh Kumar. But they can't adjourn the people's questions. We are staging agitation before the CM's residence," Pradesh Congress Committee president Bhakta Charan Das said.

The protesters clashed with security personnel after police stopped them from marching towards the

DEMAND TO REPEAL NEW MINING LAW



Chief Minister's residence. Some supporters broke through the barricades and courted arrest, while several others were taken into custody for allegedly violating the law, a senior police officer said.

Addressing the gathering, Das announced the state-wide bandh for October 8 and appealed to people to join it. The demands include repeal of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Amendment Act, 2026,

resignation of Odisha School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond over alleged errors in school textbooks, and resignation and arrest of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. Das said the Congress and its INDIA bloc partners would ensure that the bandh was observed peacefully across the state.

The INDIA bloc will also organise a demonstration in

mineral-rich Kendujhar district on October 7 against the new mining law, he said. The bloc claimed that Odisha would lose around Rs 1 lakh crore and Rs 12,000 crore annually following implementation of the new mining law. It said rallies and economic blockades would be organised across key mining belts on October 8 to halt mineral extraction and transportation.

The alliance alleged that the MMDR Amendment Act, 2026, would affect

the rights and economic interests of mineral-rich states such as Odisha. The protesters also demanded protection of water, forests and land, tribal rights, and the livelihoods and rights of mine workers and local residents in mining areas.

"The principal demands of the protest are repeal of the MMDR Amendment Act, 2026, protection of Odisha's mineral rights and financial autonomy, and safeguarding the state's mineral resources from corporate plunder," CPI(M) Odisha state secretary Suresh Chandra Panigrahy said.

State BJP president Manmohan Samal criticised the Congress, alleging that the party had a habit of opposing government initiatives. "They were opposing GST, mining reforms also. The Congress has lost its identity among the people," Samal said. BJP general secretary Biranchi Narayan Tripathy also attacked the Congress.

"Earlier the mines were being distributed among Congress leaders and their families. As PM Narendra Modi stopped it, the Congress is raising its voice to protect the interest of their leaders," he said.



IIMC students witness Assembly proceedings

SAMRIDDHI TRIPATHI
DHENKANAL

STUDENTS from the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) witnessed the live proceedings of the Odisha State Legislative Assembly for the first time. Following the session, Assembly Secretary Satyabrata Rout and Joint Director (Research division) Shiva Prasad Patnaik briefed the students on legislative procedures, protocols, and House operations. The visit also included an exploration of the Assembly archives and library, alongside the announcement of new internship opportunities for IIMC students.

An interactive Q&A session introduced the future media professionals to the pace of the newsroom and administrative reporting.

Odisha Legislative Assembly Research Division Director Tribikram Pradhan donated books on Rules of Procedure, Assembly business transactions, and brief legislative history to the IIMC, Dhenkanal library. This initiative will provide students with resources on legislative affairs to encourage academic interest in parliamentary practices.

Satyabrata Rout announced that, at the institute's request, IIMC students will be offered state legislature internships starting this year to provide them with firsthand experience in legislative processes. The aspiring journalists learned that the Odisha Assembly archives years of proceedings and won an e-Governance Award of Excellence for its paperless digital transformation.

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BHUBANESWAR

THE monsoon session of the Odisha Assembly was on Monday adjourned sine die by Speaker Surama Padhy, four days ahead of schedule, amid frequent disruptions. The monsoon session had commenced on September 22 and was scheduled to continue till October 3.

However, keeping in view the continuing heavy rainfall and the flood situation in the State, and to facilitate members to visit their respective constituencies, the House was adjourned sine die, Padhy said. Government chief whip Saroj Kumar Pradhan moved a proposal to adjourn the Assembly,



which was supported by members of the treasury bench – Upasana Mohapatra and Laxman Bag. During the session, four key bills were passed, including the Odisha State Tax on Professions, Trades, Callings and

Employments Bill, 2026, the Indian Stamp (Odisha Amendment) Bill, 2026, and the Odisha Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026.

The Assembly session witnessed frequent disruptions, with Opposition BJP

and Congress members demanding withdrawal of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Amendment Act, 2026, and the resignation of School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond over large-scale errors in textbooks of state-run schools. Due to the ruckus by the Opposition members, the House could hardly function for three hours during the entire session.

An all-party meeting convened by Deputy Speaker Bhabani Shankar Bhoi on Friday, too, could not end the stalemate as the Opposition remained adamant on their demands. The four bills were passed in the absence of the Opposition members,

as leaders of the BJD and Congress walked out of the House during the post-lunch session on Monday.

The political standoff between the ruling BJP and Opposition parties in the State over the MMDR Act had been continuing from the first day of the session on September 22.

The Opposition has been claiming that Odisha would lose over Rs 1 lakh crore in revenues if the Act is implemented in the State. In a recent reply in the Assembly, Odisha's Steel and Mines Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena had said the government has not yet assessed whether the State would gain or lose due to the new mining law.



Ashok Basa WFEO panel Chair

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODIA engineer Ashok Basa, past president of the Institution of Engineers (India), has been appointed as the Chair of the Internal Audit Committee of the World Federation of Engineering Organisations (WFEO).

Effective September 28, 2026, Ashok Basa has been appointed as the first Chair of the newly constituted WFEO Internal Audit Committee, with his tenure running through the end of 2027.

In his appointment letter, WFEO Executive Director Moez Chakchouk stated that the selection reflects the Federation's confidence in Basa's leadership, global professional standing, and commitment to engineering excellence. He also praised Basa's dedication to supporting WFEO's goals of transparency, accountability, and strong governance.

As Chair, Basa will lead the committee in reviewing WFEO's internal controls, ensuring compliance, safeguarding assets, and verifying financial data integrity. The committee will also monitor internal audit corrective actions and conduct mandated investigations.

Vigilance raids on two govt officers

BHUBANESWAR: The Odisha Vigilance on Tuesday launched raids on properties of two government officers at multiple locations for possessing disproportionate assets (DA) beyond their known sources of income.

Vigilance sleuths launched search operations on properties of Umakant Samantaray, Assistant Director of factories and boilers, Sambalpur, and Bandita Dash, Assistant Engineer (AE), posted at Badachana block in Jajpur district.

Vigilance officers led by 8 DSPs, 11 inspectors, 11 ASIs, and other supporting staff, conducted searches at seven

places in Sambalpur, Bhubaneswar, Puri, and Khordha ased on search warrants issued by the special judge, Vigilance, Sambalpur, officials said.

Dash and her associate Somonath Sethy (private person) were nabbed on Monday for demanding and taking a bribe of Rs 35,000 from an individual to release a security deposit and clear pending bills, a Vigilance officer said.

While searching Dash's residential house in Kataka, the Vigilance department recovered Rs 5.15 lakh, he said, adding that further investigation is in progress.

Meanwhile, the Vigilance department arrested Shishir

Kumar Dash, Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE), Mathili block, attached to the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Malkangiri, for possessing disproportionate assets. During raids conducted on Monday, the AEE was found in possession of disproportionate assets including two multi-storeyed buildings, 6 high value plots, Rs 82 lakh in deposits, and one four wheeler, etc, which he could not account for satisfactorily, the officer said. In this connection, a case has been registered against the engineer at Brahmapur Vigilance police station under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

IISER-NIT patent advances oral cancer therapy

SUNIL MOHAN PATNAIK
BRAHMAPUR

RESEARCHERS from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Berhampur and NIT, Rourkela have received an Indian patent for a newly developed compound that could be used in the future to make medicines for oral cancer. The research team, led by Prof Laxmidhar Rout of IISER, Berhampur and Prof Harekrushna Sahoo of NIT, Rourkela, developed the new compound, named S-27, with the aim of exploring its use in treating oral cancer. The researchers said their work is particularly focused on oral squamous cell carcinoma, a

common type of oral cancer. The new compound has shown promise as a possible candidate for further research into oral cancer treatment. The patent, titled "Design, Synthesis, and Formulation of a Cotarnine Derivative for Oral Cancer Therapy," was filed by L Prusty, H K Sahoo, P Behera, L Rout, S Biswal and B Mallick. The patent application was filed on November 19, 2025, and the patent was granted on September 25, 2026. The researchers said the new work could eventually help in developing a more affordable medicine for oral cancer. However, they stressed that much more testing is needed before the compound can be used as a medicine for patients.

CAG flags serious lapses in DMF fund spending

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

THE Comptroller and Auditor General has flagged several lacunae in the sanction and execution of projects under Odisha's District Mineral Foundation, meant for the interest and benefits of the mining-affected people and areas in the State.

In one of its reports, presented in the Odisha Assembly on Monday, the top audit authority flagged significant systemic shortcomings in the assessment, collection, and monitoring of District Mineral Foundation (DMF) contributions in test-checked mining circles and works divisions.

Incorrect application of prescribed DMF contribution rates, failure to reassess contributions after final royalty assessments, and non-levy of interest on de-

layed payments collectively resulted in a substantial loss in DMF collections, it said. Such contributions refer to a mandatory financial payment made by mining leaseholders in Odisha to DMFs.

Although six districts collected Rs 22,568.17 crore towards DMF contribution, including interest, and sanctioned 17,435 projects worth Rs 20,947.52 crore from DMF funds during 2015-16 to 2023-24, none of the six DMFs prepared a perspective plan and master plan, the audit report said.

The six audited districts are Sunderagada, Kendujhar, Jajpur, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal and Nabarangpur. "As many as 9,739 projects worth Rs 17,926.79 crore were sanctioned from DMF in Kendujhar and Sunderagada districts during 2015-16 to 2023-24. Out of this,



expenditure of Rs 983.32 crore was made towards implementing projects in 976 non-affected villages, whereas not a single project

was implemented in 488 directly affected villages and 96 indirectly affected villages," the report said.

Of the Rs 1,164.43 crore

utilised in Jajpur DMF, 43.54 per cent, that translates to Rs 507.02 crore, was used in indirectly affected areas, exceeding the prescribed limit

of 40 per cent, it stated. Out of the six selected DMFs, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal and Nabarangpur districts had not opted for a flexi deposit/auto sweep account for surplus DMF funds during 2015-2024, resulting in an interest loss of Rs 9.49 crore. Similarly, Kendujhar DMF incurred an interest loss amounting to Rs 84.51 crore.

DMF funds of Rs 171.79 crore from Jajpur, Kendujhar and Sunderagada districts were released to the MGNREGS director for the payment of additional wages to job seekers, which violates the Ministry of Rural Development guidelines, the CAG said.

"Out of total administrative expenditure of 99.81 crore in Sunderagada DMF, Rs 25.01 crore was irregularly utilised for other than administrative expendi-

ture, like engagement of vehicle for police patrolling, renovation of municipality office, renovation of reading room at Collector's residence, inauguration charges and organisation of school function etc," the auditor pointed out.

In Jajpur, Kendujhar and Sunderagada DMFs, implementing agencies had not returned the unspent amount of Rs 470.25 crore and the interest earned thereon, amounting to Rs 26.51 crore, to the DMFs after project completion. Similarly, the implementing agencies of Dhenkanal and Mayurbhanj had not returned interest amounting to Rs 87 lakh to their respective DMFs.

Furthermore, an expenditure of Rs 136.77 crore was made for constructing a hockey stadium out of DMF funds in Sunderagada, and

the project does not fall under any activities permissible under the scheme guidelines, the audit said.

The CAG further pointed out that Rs 109.45 crore from Sunderagada's DMF was paid to a private hospital in Raurkela against a requisite payment of Rs 98.85 crore, resulting in an excess payment of Rs 10.60 crore during the Covid pandemic. The auditor advised the Odisha government to ensure proper maintenance of accounts of DMF funds as per the codal provisions and refund of accrued interest thereon by the implementing agencies.

It recommended that the State government ensure timely completion of projects sanctioned and full utilisation of funds released within the financial year and submission of utilisation certificates.