

CM reviews law and order situation

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BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday said a stable law and order environment was essential for the State's economic growth. Majhi made the remarks during a high-level review meeting on the prevailing law-and-order situation and the pace of industrialisation in the State. The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Hemant Sharma, DGP Y B Khurania and the Chief Minister's advisor Prakash Mishra.

The meeting happened amid the row over the alleged assault on BJD MLA Ranendra Pratap Swain in the Athargarh area of Cuttack on Friday. Earlier in the day, Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik wrote to the Chief Minister, alleging that "BJP-backed goons" had blocked and physically prevented Swain from carrying out his public duties. Describing the episode as evidence of a "rapidly deteriorating law-and-order situation"



in the State, Patnaik said the incident represented a direct attack on democratic institutions.

At the meeting, Majhi reviewed the implementation of directives issued on May 14, when he had instructed the DGP to instil fear among criminals, restore public confidence and intensify action against organised crime, officials said.

The Chief Minister

was informed that police action against criminals had intensified, citing two recent police encounters in Sambalpur and Berhampur in which accused persons were injured.

According to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Majhi directed the police to function with greater efficiency, alertness and professionalism to ensure public safety and maintain people's confidence in the

system.

The meeting, held ahead of the BJP government's second anniversary on June 12, also reviewed progress on election promises, implementation of welfare schemes, industrial growth, employment generation and future development plans for the State.

The Chief Minister also discussed the pace of industrialisation with Sharma, who additionally oversees the Industries

department.

The high-level meeting targeted a dual approach of maintaining public safety while solidifying investor confidence as his administration nears its two-year milestone. The DGP reported a measurable increase in the State's conviction rates, attributing the rise to improved evidence collection frameworks updated under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Heatwave to continue till May 28

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THE IMD on Saturday forecast continuation of heatwave conditions across Odisha till May 28, with five places in the western region of the State recording temperatures of 45 degrees Celsius or above. The industrial town of Jharsuguda recorded a maximum temperature of 45.2 degrees Celsius, followed by Sambalpur, Hirakud, Titlagarh and Boudh, all logging 45 degrees Celsius.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD), in its evening bulletin, said heatwave conditions are very likely to prevail at places over Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Bolangir districts, while warm night conditions are also very likely at places over Bolangir district. The weather office issued an orange warning (be prepared) for heatwave conditions on Sunday for these districts.

It also cautioned about heatwave conditions at places over Boudh district and hot and humid conditions over Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Gajapati, Ganjam, Puri, Khurda and Nayagarh



on Sunday. These districts were issued a yellow warning (be aware). According to the IMD, there will be no large change in maximum temperatures or daytime temperatures across the State over the next five days.

Thereafter, maximum temperatures are likely to fall by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius, the bulletin said. Meanwhile, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari advised citizens to stay indoors and avoid stepping out unless necessary. He also urged people to avoid outdoor activity during peak afternoon hours and to drink water frequently. "If you are venturing outdoors, then wear light cotton clothing and carry a water bottle and an umbrella," the minister

said. The Special Relief Commissioner's office has also put all the districts on alert and asked collectors to keep a watch on the IMD forecast and act accordingly. So far, three persons have died due to heat-related incidents in the State, the SRC office said.

Meanwhile, the Met office also said the southwest monsoon is likely to advance to some more areas in the next few days. "Conditions are favourable for further advance of southwest monsoon into some more parts of southwest and southeast Arabian Sea, Comorin Area, southwest, southeast and east-central Bay of Bengal and remaining parts of Andaman Sea during next 3-4 days," it said.

Coop official held in Rs 75 lakh fraud case

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RAYAGADA

ODISHA Vigilance arrested a cooperative official for his alleged involvement in a Rs 75 lakh fraud case. The Vigilance on Thursday arrested Tarini Prasad Tripathy, Managing Director of K Singhpur Large Area Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society (LAMPCS) in Rayagada district. Tripathy is accused of embezzling LAMPCS funds amounting to Rs 75 lakh, said a Vigilance officer.

During the investigation, the department found that



the fraudulent activity took place between 2024 and 2026.

Tripathy allegedly executed the fraud by systematically manipulating official records and

defrauded the money of the LAMPCS.

The investigation also found that the misappropriated amount included savings and deposits of primary members of the co-operative society, affecting local depositors who depended on the institution for financial security.

In this connection, a case has been registered at Koraput Vigilance police station under the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita against the Managing Director of K Singhpur LAMPCS, the officer said.

Fake NIA officer caught for fabricating case

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THE Commissionerate Police on Friday arrested a man for allegedly impersonating an officer of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and influencing a woman to lodge a fabricated complaint. The accused, identified as Ashish Reddy (45) of Lajpat Nagar in New Delhi, was found to be posing as an NIA officer and interfering in the investigation of a case registered at Kharavel Nagar police station earlier on the basis of a woman's complaint.

According to police, the woman had recently lodged a complaint alleging that she



had been sexually assaulted by unknown persons inside a vehicle near Puri-Konark Road in April. However, during the course of the investigation, police found that the accused, Reddy, who was known to the com-

plaintain, had introduced himself as a senior NIA officer and was actively influencing the investigation process.

He allegedly pressured investigating officials and played a key role in drafting

the complaint. Subsequent verification with the National Investigation Agency confirmed that Reddy was not associated with the organisation and had been impersonating an officer using fake credentials.

During further inquiry, the complainant also admitted that the earlier allegations of abduction and sexual assault by unknown persons were fabricated. She told police that the complaint had been drafted under Reddy's influence following a personal dispute with her friend.

Police also found that Reddy had established contact with the woman on the pretext of helping her and

later sexually exploited her. He allegedly drafted a false FIR, which was initially submitted at Infocity police station and later transferred to Kharavel Nagar police station.

During the investigation, police seized a fake NIA identity card, a T-shirt bearing the NIA logo, a vehicle, mobile phones and other items, including weapons, from the accused.

Reddy has been booked under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Arms Act. Police said further investigation was underway to verify his antecedents and possible involvement in other cases.

Odisha bans strike in power sector

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THE Odisha government on Friday invoked provisions of the Essential Services (Maintenance) Act, prohibiting strikes in the power sector to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply amid rising complaints of outages, officials said. The order, aimed at maintaining seamless generation, transmission and distribution of electricity, will cover utilities such as GRIDCO, OPTCL, OHPC, OPGC and DISCOMs, and remain in force for six months from June 21, according to an official notification.

Officials said the ESMA, 1988, was imposed to prevent strikes and related protests in power generation, transmission and distribution establishments across the State. The notification stated that the government was "satisfied that in the interest of the public, it is necessary to prohibit strikes" to maintain industrial peace and optimise power generation, transmission and distribution. Sources in the power sector said the move came amid reports of protests by a section of temporary and casual workers over issues related to layoffs, wages, out-

sourcing and service conditions.

There have also been reports of power outages from Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Bolangir and other parts of the State. By bringing electricity services under the ambit of essential services, the government has legally barred employees from resorting to strikes or protests that could disrupt operations, officials said. Odisha's peak-hour power demand this summer has risen to around 6,600 MW, the sources said.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister K V Singh Deo said in a post on X: "Electricity is the backbone of Odisha's progress - fueling industries, empowering agriculture, and illuminating every household."

"Recognising its critical importance, the government of Odisha has invoked the Odisha Essential Services (Maintenance) Act, 1988, to prohibit strikes in the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity across GRIDCO, OPTCL, OHPC, OPGC, and all DISCOMs." This directive ensures uninterrupted functioning of essential power infrastructure during the severe heat wave conditions gripping the State, he said.

Two more arrested in Rs 9.6 cr bank fraud case

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THE Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police have arrested two more persons for their alleged involvement in a Rs 9.6 crore bank fraud case, officials said on Friday. With the fresh apprehensions, a total of six persons have been arrested by the police so far.

The fresh arrests were made in Chhatisgarh capital Raipur on Thursday, and the accused, identified as Surjit Roy and Sameer Srivastav, were brought to Odisha on transit remand on Friday, an officer of the EOW said.

The arrests were made on the basis of a police case registered by the Chief Manager of the Baripada branch of a PSU bank.

According to the police, the fraudsters withdrew the amount from the bank account of the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) trust, Mayurbhanj, by producing forged



cheques, the official said. Of the illegally transferred amount, Rs 5.04 crore was blocked and Rs 13.56 lakh lying in 33 accounts have been frozen, he said.

Roy and Srivastav were found to be the proprietors/signatory authorities of Roy Associates and SS Traders, respectively. A total of Rs 45.19 lakh was transferred to the bank account of Roy's firm, while Rs 39.19 lakh was transferred to the account of Srivastav's company.

During the investigation, the EOW found that the two arrested persons are



members of a larger gang with a complex network spread across Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha, officials said. After their arrest, EOW got some important clues about the entire gang.

They have been indulging in such scams for the last four years, they said.

Earlier, four accused persons, identified as Pomeshtembhara, Ghanshyam Ahuja, Ajmir Mondal and Brajesh Mishra, were arrested in connection with the fraud case.

University of Craiova confers honorary doctorate on Samanta

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BHUBANESWAR



THE University of Craiova, one of Romania's oldest public universities, has conferred an honorary doctorate upon Achyuta Samanta, the eminent educationist, social reformer and Founder of KIIT and KISS.

The honorary doctorate was awarded to Samanta on Saturday at a special ceremony organised by the university on its premises. This is the 73rd honorary doctorate received by him. Samanta was honoured in recognition of his remarkable contribution towards

the development of society through education. The honorary degree was presented in the presence of the President of the Senate of Craiova, Leonardo Geo Menescu, along with several academicians, students and distinguished guests.

Established in 1947, the University of Craiova is among the oldest public universities in Romania. The university senate had recommended the name of Samanta in accordance with its constitutional responsibilities under the applicable laws. During the full senate meeting held last month, the university resolved to confer

the honorary doctorate upon him. Expressing his gratitude to the authorities of the University of Craiova for the honour, Samanta said that he has been continuously working in the fields of education and social service for more than three decades. He stated that the recognition would further inspire him to continue his efforts in the areas of education and social welfare. Stating that the honour is the result of the dedication and hard work of the staff members of KIIT and KISS, Samanta dedicated the recognition to all employees of the two institutions.

Minister reviews Rath Yatra preparations

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ODISHA Law Minister Pritihiviraj Harichandan on Friday stressed the need for proper coordination between officials and servitors, particularly the Daitapati priests, to ensure the smooth conduct of the upcoming annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath in Puri. The Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri is governed by the State Law department under the provisions of the Shree Jagannath Temple Act, 1955.

Harichandan chaired a high-level review meeting at the State guest house, attended by senior government officials, servitors and other stakeholders. "A discussion was held to ensure that all activities of the Rath Yatra are conducted in a coordinated, systematic, and safe manner by maintaining coordination between services and administration," the minister told reporters. He highlighted the crucial role of Daitapati servitors during the annual nine-day sojourn of the holy trinity -- Lord Balabhadra,

Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath --beginning July 16.

The minister said Daitapati servitors act as custodians of the deities when they come out of the 12th-century shrine in Puri for the annual Rath Yatra. "They take care of everything for the deities, and therefore, their punctuality in performing rituals smoothens the festival," he said.

Responding to a question, Harichandan said there was no difference among the Daitapati servitors and that they remain united in their

devotion and service to Lord Jagannath. Stating that every journey and festival of Lord Jagannath is deeply connected with the emotions of devotees, the minister said all government departments, servitors and security agencies must work in coordination to ensure smooth conduct of the festival.

During the meeting, key aspects such as timely Pahanis (processions), chariot pulling, Adapa Mandap Bije (taking idols to their aunt's house at Sri Gundicha Temple), regulated public dar-

shan, crowd management, barricading arrangements, security measures and facilities for devotees were discussed. The importance of advance dissemination of ritual schedules was also emphasised.

Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee informed the meeting about the preparedness of materials required for the Rath Yatra and chariot pulling.

He said chariot wood, ropes, cloth coverings, fra-



grant resins (jhuna), sandalwood and other essential items have already been stocked in advance.

The meeting is part of broader preparations by the State government and police to ensure an incident-free

Rath Yatra, especially in the wake of last year's stampede near Gundicha Temple that claimed three lives.