

Odisha gears up for Prez, PM visit

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BHUBANESWAR

AS Odisha gears up for the visit of President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 20, the government on Tuesday said the State will get developmental projects worth several thousand crores of rupees on the occasion. The country's two highest constitutional functionaries are scheduled to attend a function marking the second anniversary of Odisha's BJP government. "June 20 is also the birth anniversary of our President who is coming to her 'karma bhoomi' Rairangpur in Mayurbhanj district. On this day, both the President and the Prime Minister will inaugurate and lay foundation stones for a number of development projects collectively valued at several thousand crore rupees," an official statement said. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi reviewed the security and other preparations for the ceremony. The projects waiting to be



launched by Murmu and Modi included the much-awaited railway projects and a mega coal gasification project, officials said. Murmu, who was born on June 20, 1958, at Padiebeda village in Mayurbhanj district, started her political career as a councillor of Rairangpur Municipality in 1997. Later, she became an MLA, a minister, the governor of Jharkhand and finally the President of India. "Since she started her po-

litical innings from Rairangpur town, her birthday visit is seen significant and a day of joy for the people," an official at the CMO said. As per the schedule, while Murmu will reach Rairangpur on June 19, Modi will arrive at the tribal hinterland town the next day. To ensure the smooth conduct of this high-profile visit and to tighten the security arrangements, the Chief Minister directed all the departments to work

in coordination with each other so that there is no deviation especially during the mega public meeting and the movement of VVIPs. The officials informed the Chief Minister that special arrangements have been made by the State government and local administration to welcome the President in her birthplace. The review meeting was attended by senior officers including Chief Secretary Anu Garg.

CM orders high-level probe into textbook errors

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TAKING serious note of the errors detected in school textbooks published by the Odisha government, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Wednesday directed the officials to take immediate corrective measures and ordered a high-level inquiry into the matter.

According to an official statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office, Majhi chaired an important meeting at Lok Seva Bhavan to review the issue. School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond, Chief Secretary Anu Garg, and senior officials from various departments participated in the meeting through virtual mode. During the meeting, the



Chief Minister decided to take immediate steps to rectify the errors found in the textbooks. He also ordered the constitution of a three-member high-level committee under the chairmanship of the Development Commissioner to

investigate the lapses and identify the officials or agencies responsible for the mistakes. The committee has been directed to submit its report within seven days. Based on the findings of the committee, stringent action

will be taken against the officials or institutions found responsible for the errors. Expressing concern over the issue, Majhi emphasised the need for maintaining the highest standards of accuracy in educational materials and instructed officials to ensure that all identified mistakes are corrected without delay. As per reports, the new textbooks prepared by SCERT, Odisha, under Odisha Curriculum 2025 for Classes I to VIII contain nearly 1,678 identified errors. The highest number of mistakes — 705 — has been found in the Class VIII textbooks alone, including 294 errors in Jijnasa, 114 in Sanskrit, 25 in Social Science, and 31 in Literature, as well as several significant errors in English and Mathematics.

Mushroom cultivation flourishes in Ganjam village



SUNIL MOHAN PATNAIK
BERHAMPUR

ONCE known primarily for migration of workers in search of livelihoods, Ganjam district is now home to Odisha's mushroom capital. Radhamohanpur village in Chikiti block has carved a unique identity through large-scale mushroom cultivation, with more than 60 families producing and supplying over four tonnes of mushrooms daily to markets across southern Odisha, generating employment and prosperity within the village.

Radhamohanpur village in Ganjam district's Chikiti block has emerged as a model of rural self-reliance, earning

recognition as "India's Mushroom Village" for producing and supplying more than four tonnes of mushrooms to markets every day. While thousands of workers migrate from the district in search of jobs, the village has created sustainable livelihoods through mushroom cultivation and spawn production. Nearly 60 families in the village are engaged in mushroom farming, while 10 to 12 families produce mushroom spawn. Around 70 families depend directly or indirectly on the sector, which began gaining momentum in 2012 after farmers received training from agricultural institutions. The village has over 60 mushroom farms, with oyster mushrooms being the

primary crop due to strong market demand. Mushrooms harvested here are supplied to Berhampur, Paralakhemundi, Jeypore, Koraput, Nabarangpur and other markets across southern Odisha. Farmers said women play a leading role in cultivation and processing activities, with each farm employing five to seven women workers. Villagers credit late Shantimohan Pattnaik, a former cooperative secretary, for introducing and promoting mushroom cultivation in the area. Despite its success, farmers have sought government support for easier access to loans and financial assistance to expand production and maintain spawn-production equipment.

Two detained in gang-rape case

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KENDRAPARA

THE Odisha Police on Tuesday detained two persons in Chhattisgarh in connection with the gang-rape of a 17-year-old girl at a place hardly 200 metres away from the office of the Superintendent of Police in Kendrapara district, an officer said on Tuesday. The incident took place at Jajanga on Monday night and came to light on Tuesday after the victim's mother lodged a complaint at the Kendrapara Sadar police station, alleging that two persons in an inebriated state forcefully took her daughter to a secluded place while the victim had gone to attend to nature's call. It was alleged that the two raped the minor girl at knifepoint. The accused also assaulted her when she tried to resist them. The miscreants also threatened to kill her if she told anyone about the incident, the police officer said. After the complaint was filed, the police launched an investigation and detained two accused persons, aged 30 and 34 years. A case was registered against the accused under various sections of the BNS and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, Kendrapara SP Siddharth Kataria said. The girl and her parents, who hail from a village in Chhattisgarh, have been selling brooms and residing in a roadside tent for the last three months, police said.

Oppn slams State govt over 'errors'

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THE Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Congress on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the State government over serious errors found in the newly published Odia textbooks for Classes I to VIII, alleging that the glaring mistakes expose the deterioration of Odisha's education system under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters, BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty described the textbooks as a "national embarrassment" and alleged that they constitute a direct assault on the Odia language, culture and the future of lakhs of students. He said the BJP government, which frequently raises the slogan of "Odia Asmita," has exposed its complete failure through the textbooks.

According to Mohanty, the new textbooks prepared by SCERT Odisha under Odisha Curriculum 2025 for Classes I to VIII contain nearly 1,678



identified errors. He alleged that the mistakes go beyond typographical errors and include serious spelling mistakes, factual inaccuracies, geographical distortions, incorrect names of historical and literary personalities, and wrong photographs and captions. Citing examples, Mohanty said a photograph of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly has been presented as that of the Odisha Legislative Assembly, the Niyamgiri Hills have been shown as being located in Jharkhand,

Ganjam district has been referred to as Brahmapur district, and the names of noted Odia personalities such as Sunanda Patnaik and Pandit Nilakantha Das have been misspelled. He said the errors would mislead students about their history, geography, culture and identity. He further alleged that the School and Mass Education department attempted to cover up the lapses by hurriedly issuing a correction list, exposing negligence and a lack of accountability. The BJD has therefore

demanding the immediate withdrawal of all defective textbooks, a high-level inquiry into the negligence involved in their preparation and proofreading, an investigation into the officials and ministers responsible, and the publication of error-free textbooks before the next academic year. Similarly, Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Bhakta Charan Das also targeted the State government, saying the administrative failure is "a mockery of the State's education system" and "a direct insult to Odisha's rich history, geography and culture." The party has demanded the immediate withdrawal of all textbooks from Class I to Class VIII containing inaccuracies, a transparent and time-bound investigation into the SCERT review board to punish the officials who approved these textbooks, and the resignation of the State School and Mass Education Minister or issuance of a public apology for the glaring errors.

Engineer held for forging Dy Speaker's letter

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AN Odisha government engineer was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly forging a letter in the name of Odisha Assembly Deputy Speaker Bhabani Shankar Bhoi to secure an official transfer, police said. The accused, identified as Laxman Hembram (31), is an assistant executive engineer posted at Harichandanpur block in Keonjhar district.

A case was registered at the Capital police station in Bhubaneswar on June 13 based on a complaint filed by the Deputy Speaker's private secretary. The FIR was lodged under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Information Technology Act against two assistant

executive engineers, including a woman. Bhubaneswar Zone-I ACP Ramesh Chandra Bisoi said Hembram and the woman engineer allegedly prepared a forged recommendation letter purportedly issued by the Deputy Speaker and used it to obtain transfers to Sundargarh district. The forgery came to light after authorities verified the document and found that the signature and letterhead had been fabricated, police said. Following the investigation, Hembram was arrested on Wednesday and brought to the Capital police station for questioning. "Further investigation is underway to ascertain the role of the woman engineer and any other persons involved in the case," Bisoi told reporters.

Officials asked to ensure no eligible voter is left out

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DEPUTY Election Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti directed Odisha district collectors-cum-electoral registration officers (DEOs) to ensure that no eligible voter is left out during the ongoing SIR of electoral rolls in the state.

Bharti issued the direction on Tuesday while reviewing the progress of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise and holding discussions with collectors and DEOs of nine districts on the status of implementation, an official statement said. He reviewed the distribution of

enumeration forms, the extent of digitisation completed so far, and issues causing delays in the process, it said.

During the meeting, the officials informed that out of around 3.33 crore registered voters in the State, 3.16 crore (94.6 per cent) had been successfully mapped before the start of the SIR exercise, leaving 5.34 per cent unmapped. "As of today (June 16), 99.20 per cent of enumeration forms have been distributed to voters, and 46.44 per cent of these forms have already been digitised," officials said, adding that Sundargarh district was the top performer in both form distribution and digitisation.



Expressing satisfaction with the pace of work, Bharti directed officials to complete the entire process before the June 28 deadline. Meanwhile, Odisha's Chief Electoral Of-

ficer R S Gopalan said the official deadline for form distribution and submission is June 28, but officials have been asked to complete the process by June 23-24.

ECoR boosts slope safety ahead of monsoon

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BHUBANESWAR

TO ensure safe and reliable train operations during the monsoon, the East Coast Railway (ECOR) has expedited protection and strengthening works across the Kottavalasa-Kirandul (KK), Koraput-Rayagada (KR) and Rayagada-Vizianagaram (RV) sections. The works are being undertaken in vulnerable ghat stretches that are susceptible to rockfall, soil erosion and weather-related disruptions.

As part of the safety drive, ECoR is deploying advanced slope stabilisation measures,

including Rock Fall Barriers, Rock Bolting, Wire Mesh Netting, Geomat Laying and tunnel strengthening to improve infrastructure resilience and operational reliability. In the KK-I section, substantial progress has been recorded with completion of 910 metres of Rock Fall Barrier installation, 29,776 square metres of Wire Mesh Netting and 22,197 metres of Rock Bolting.

Field operations have also intensified, with 346 drilling points completed and 40 holes grouted for stabilisation. Additionally, 300 square metres of Rhomboidal Mesh and 730 square metres of Mono-

oriented Mesh have been laid at vulnerable locations to provide enhanced slope protection.

In the KK-II section, the targeted 120 metres of Rock Fall Barrier work has been completed. Additionally, 4,200 square metres of Wire Mesh Netting has been executed to strengthen vulnerable hill cuttings.

Protection measures in the Koraput-Rayagada (KR) section are also progressing steadily. The Railway has completed the entire targeted 300 metres of Rock Fall Barrier work and 1,600 metres of Rock Bolting, achieving full completion in both categories. In addition, 10,000 square metres

of Wire Mesh Netting has been completed. According to ECoR, these preventive interventions are intended to reduce the risk of loose rock movement, improve slope stability and maintain uninterrupted train movement through difficult ghat terrain.

In the Rayagada-Vizianagaram (RV) section, protection works in vulnerable cuttings between Lanjigarh Road and Rayagada are being taken up on priority and are scheduled for completion by June 30.

To further strengthen tunnel safety under the KR section, tenders for strengthening three tunnels have already been awarded. Traffic and power

block requirements have been finalised and preparatory arrangements are underway to execute the works.

The ECoR has also initiated geological surveys in other vulnerable cuttings across the KK and KR sections to identify sustainable long-term remedial measures and reinforce infrastructure safety.

The Railway stated that infrastructure safety, modernisation and disaster preparedness remain key priorities to ensure safe, smooth and uninterrupted passenger and freight operations across its critical ghat corridors.

