

Orangutans’ DNA sampling put off by 10 days



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BHUBANESWAR

THE proposed DNA sampling of five baby orangutans rescued from a forest in Baleshwar district has been postponed by at least 10 days as the animals are yet to fully stabilise emotionally in their new surroundings, officials said on Thursday.

The decision was taken by authorities of Nandankanan Zoological Park following the recommendation of the Centre for Wildlife Health (CWH) Committee, comprising veterinary experts from the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT). State Forest and Environment Minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia, who is monitoring the orangutans’ health and wellbeing, said DNA sampling was essential to ascertain their origin.

“Conducting DNA tests

is part of the process to ascertain the origin of the orangutan genetics, species classification and their parents. It will also help the investigation into how the animals came to Odisha. They are not native to India,” the minister said.

The CWH Committee, which examined the orangutans’ condition on Wednesday, advised against conducting sampling immediately. “According to CWH advice, the animals need to be stabilised in the new environment and get accustomed to their caretakers and feed for 10 days. After that, bio-samples, including blood and oral swabs, will be collected for screening,” Nandankanan Zoological Park Director Sanath Kumar N said. All five orangutans are currently in good health, eating properly and remaining active, officials said. However, Singkhuntia said the ani-

Odisha won’t tolerate wildlife trafficking: CM

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BHUBANESWAR

CHIEF Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday ordered a probe into the circumstances under which five baby orangutans were brought to the State, saying Odisha will not be allowed to become a transit route for illegal wildlife trafficking.

Majhi, who is on a five-day business tour of the UAE, expressed deep concern over the rescue of the five baby orangutans from a jungle in Baleshwar district on Tuesday, a statement issued by the Chief Minister’s Office said. Despite his busy schedule in Dubai, the Chief Minister has been closely monitoring developments in Odisha and has directed officials to ascertain how the animals reached Baleshwar and uncover the background of the incident, it said.

Majhi has also ordered an investigation into the route used to bring the rare ani-



mals to Odisha, how they entered the State, the people involved in their transportation and the purpose for which they were brought, according to the statement. “Odisha will never be allowed to serve as a transit route for the illegal trafficking of exotic wildlife. If any network is found to be involved in this illegal transport, it will be identified, and strict action will be taken in accordance with the law,” Majhi said.

The Chief Minister directed the authorities concerned to investigate the matter in coordination with the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and other agencies of the Centre. He also directed officials to ensure that the rescued orangutans receive appropriate medical treatment, security and necessary care in accordance with established wildlife protection protocols while the investigation is underway.

CM meets UAE minister to discuss investments

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BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday met UAE Cabinet Member and Minister of Economy and Tourism Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri in Dubai on the second day of the State’s three-day investor outreach programme (September 9–11).

According to an official statement, the discussions focused on strengthening economic and investment ties between Odisha and the UAE, with particular emphasis on exploring new investment opportunities in the State. Al Marri also serves as Chairman of the Council of International Investments.

During the interaction, the Chief Minister highlighted Odisha’s favourable business environment, strong industrial ecosystem and investment potential across key sectors, inviting UAE-based investors to explore opportunities and invest in the State.

Earlier on Wednesday, Chief Minister Majhi commenced the outreach in Abu Dhabi with a high-level roundtable involving senior leadership from International Holding



Company (IHC) and Adani Group. A major outcome was the signing of an MoU between the government of Odisha, IHC and the Adani Group to explore 14 new projects with an indicative investment of Rs 2,10,500 crore and employment potential for roughly 8,68,200 people.

The proposed portfolio spans downstream metals, slurry pipelines, critical minerals and rare earths, petrochemical derivatives, renewable energy equipment, healthcare, industrial infrastructure, tourism, skill development and sports infrastructure.

Additionally, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed with the Indian Business and Professional Group (IBPG) to promote bilateral trade

and explore investment opportunities in Odisha.

The engagement also explored opportunities to increase exports of Odisha’s products, including spices such as turmeric and ginger, seafood and other products, while encouraging contract manufacturing for leading UAE brands.

The Chief Minister also engaged with Hazeem Sultan Al Suwaidi, CEO of Borouge, inviting the firm to explore a large-scale downstream chemicals complex linked to Indian Oil Corporation Limited’s proposed naphtha cracker at Paradip, followed by a roundtable with UAE-based investment institutions focused on institutional participation in Odisha’s infrastructure pipeline.

3 die of asphyxiation

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KORAPUT

THREE persons died of suspected asphyxiation after entering a septic tank to clean it in Rayagada district on Wednesday, police said. The incident took place in Tarpaguda in the Padmapur police station area.

The deceased were identified as Harishchandra Bir (46), Prakash Lima (47) and Alok Karad (45), all locals. One of them entered the tank first, following which the other two went inside one after another. They subsequently became unconscious, apparently due to lack of oxygen or toxic gases inside the tank,

police said. Fire services personnel later retrieved the bodies of the three victims from the tank. “The three prima facie appear to have died of asphyxiation after entering the septic tank. The exact cause of death will be known after postmortem,” Padmapur police station inspector-in-charge BD Pradhan said.

Odisha to receive heavy rainfall due to low pressure



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BHUBANESWAR

THE IMD has forecast heavy rain in 22 districts of Odisha on Thursday under the influence of a low-pressure area in the Bay of Bengal. The weather office has issued a ‘red warning’ (take action) for Kalahandi and Kandhamala districts, predicting extremely heavy rainfall.

Under the influence of the upper air cyclonic circulation over northern Bay of Bengal and adjoining Bangladesh, a low-pressure area has been formed over the region at 5.30 am on Thursday, the India Meteorological Department said in a bulletin.

The IMD has issued an ‘orange warning’ (be prepared to take action) for Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Koraput, Gajapati and Ganjam districts for the day. Besides, heavy rainfall is expected in the districts of Baleshwar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghapur, Kataka, Kenjduhar, Mayurbhanj, Boudh, Nuapada, Balangir, Malkangiri, Puri, Khordha, and Nayagada during the day.

A ‘yellow warning’ (be aware) has been issued for these 15 districts for Thursday. In view of the warning issued by the weather office, the Mayurbhanj Collector ordered the closure

of all government and aided schools on Thursday as a precautionary measure, an official said. Private schools were asked to suspend their classes after 10 am, officials said. Forecasting similar weather conditions for the next two days, the IMD has issued a heavy rain warning for 10 districts for Friday and four districts for Saturday.

As sea conditions would remain very rough, the weather office has advised fishermen not to venture into the sea along the West Bengal-Odisha-Andhra Pradesh coast till September 11. Local cautionary signal No. III (LC-3) has been hoisted at all ports of Odisha.

Bijay carves BRICS leaders in chalk



SUNIL MOHAN PATNAIK
BRAHMAMUR

INDIAN miniature artist K Bijay Kumar Reddy has showcased extraordinary precision by recreating the leaders of the five BRICS countries in chalk miniatures, with each figure measuring just one centimetre in height. The leaders are Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Russia President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, China President Xi Jinping and South Africa President Cyril Ramaphosa. Reddy has also carved a BRICS logo measuring only 5 mm. The intricate work took nearly a month of continuous effort, demanding exceptional patience and precision. Professionally an Electrical Engineer with Tata Power, Reddy is a Guinness

World Records holder known for his miniature craftsmanship. He has received recognition from several government institutions and organisations.

Seeking to take Indian miniature art to the international stage, Reddy has written to the embassies of BRICS countries, offering his artwork as a symbol of friendship and cultural exchange. The High Commission of South Africa congratulated him on his Guinness achievement and requested him to prepare and send miniature chalk portraits of the BRICS leaders along with the BRICS logo. Reddy said his endeavour was aimed at promoting Indian miniature art, cultural friendship and international cooperation, demonstrating how even a few millimetres of art can convey a much larger message.

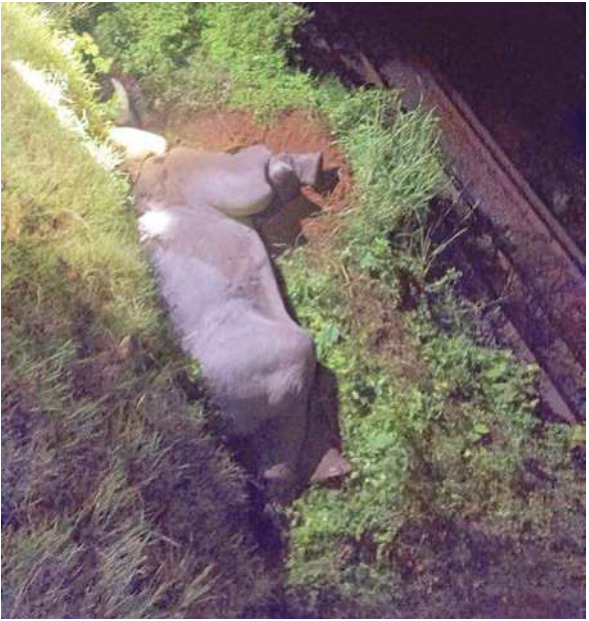
Jumbo dies after being hit by light engine

C B SINGH
RAYAGADA

A male elephant was killed by a train near Brundabadi village in Rayagada district’s Bissam Cuttack block on September 9 night. The incident has raised serious questions about how effectively the Forest department tracks elephant movements and communicates alerts to the railway system.

Forest officials are investigating the elephant’s death and performing a standard post-mortem examination. Meanwhile, serious questions have been raised about whether the elephant’s presence on the railway tracks was detected and reported to train authorities in time.

The local station master said a light engine passed through the area at around 10.45 pm with no prior elephant movement warnings from the Forest department. This lack of communication raises a critical question: Was there any advance indication that an elephant was approaching the tracks? Railway tracks near elephant



habitats are high-risk zones where preventing collisions requires constant field surveillance, identifying vulnerable areas, and quick coordination between forest and railway officials.

The Forest department’s press release omits whether the Brundabadi stretch was a known elephant corridor, if recent movements were re-

corded, or if railway authorities received warnings before the train passed. It is unclear if the department monitored night-time elephant movements along the track or if forest staff routinely alerted railway authorities. Advance warning is critical, as train crews have almost no time to react to animals on the tracks at night.

‘Operation Anweshan’

Odisha Police rescue 101 kids from 17 States

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Police has rescued 101 children, including 47 girls, from 17 States during ‘Operation Anweshan’, a special drive conducted between August 28 and September 8, a senior officer said on Thursday.

Briefing reporters here, Additional Director General (ADG) and head of the Crime Against Women and

Children Wing (CAW&CW) of Odisha Police, S Shyni, said 17 teams were sent to 17 States where Odia children are generally found. “During the operation, 54 boys and 47 girls were traced,” Shyni said. The youngest child rescued was just three months old and was found in a shelter home with her minor mother. The children were rescued from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand,

Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, New Delhi, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Of the 101 children, 83, including 46 boys and 37 girls, were traced from different Child Care Institutions (CCIs), while seven children -- six boys and a girl -- were traced from labour sites, Shyni said.

In addition, 11 children, including nine girls, who had been reported missing

and in whose cases FIRs were registered in Odisha, were traced during the operation, she said. According to officials, the highest number of children, 30, were traced from West Bengal, followed by Karnataka with 11 and Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu with 10 each. Of the 101 children, 100 have been repatriated to Odisha for their reintegration and further rehabilitation, Shyni said. One child had to be debarked

from a train midway after falling ill, she added.

Women & Child Development Commissioner-cum-Secretary Mrinalini Darswal proactively supported the police-led campaign, officials said. The operation demonstrated the sustained efforts of Odisha Police, its range teams, district police and other stakeholders to trace missing children beyond the State’s geographical boundaries and facilitate their safe



return and rehabilitation. The State government is utilising local District Child

Protection Units (DCPUs) and child welfare networks to properly run family back-

ground checks, verify guardians, and manage safe re-entries into their communities.