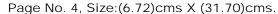




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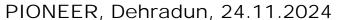


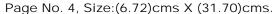
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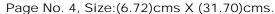






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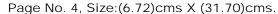






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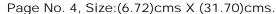






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# NHRC asks CS to pay Rs 5L to victim's kin

PNS BHUBANESWAR

he National Human Rights Commission(NHRC) has recommended the Odisha Chief Secretary to provide a Rs 5-lakh compensation to the family members of an under trial prisoner (UTP) Gobinda Sahu, who died in the Kantabanji Sub-Jail in Balangir district.

The NHRC passed the order taking cognisance of a petition filed by advocate and rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy.

Tripathy had earlier alleged that the death of Sahu in custody is violation of human rights laws. He sought for an independent and impartial investigation of the incident i and heavy compensation to the bereaved family members, with legal action against the jail officials if they are found guilty.

Tripathy further stated that the cause of death of the UTP is given as asphyxia due to hanging. Though the inquiry Magistrate did not find negligence in the death of deceased, it is apparent that the deceased had committed suicide while in judicial custody.

The legal position with respect to the custodial death due to suicide or assault by other co-inmates or due to medical negligence is quite clear and well settled. The Supreme Court and High Courts in number of judgments have upheld the vicarious liability of the State to pay compensation to the next of the kin of the deceased in such cases, the petitioner stated.

The NHRC asked the Chief Secretary to submit the compliance report along with the proof of payment to the commission within eight weeks.



## NHRC visits Lagcherla

#### <u>The Hindu Bureau</u>

HYDERABAD

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has started its inquiry on the police arrests of villagers of Lagcherla in Vikarabad district following the attack on the Vikarabad Collector, who had gone to the village for a public hearing for acquisition lands for a pharma project.

The team consisting of Law department Deputy Registrar Mukesh and two inspectors conducted the field investigation at Rotibanda Tanda in Dudyala Mandal of Vikarabad.

#### **FULL REPORT ON**

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# NHRC delegation visits Lagcherla

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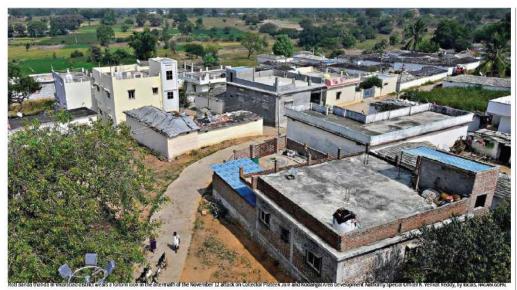
The NHRC team visited the village based on a complaint received that the police attacked and illegally arrested the local tribals who had opposed the land acquisition.

The team consisting of Law department Deputy Registrar Mukesh and two inspectors conducted the field investigation at Rotibanda Tanda in Dudyala Mandal of Vikarabad. The team enquired from villagers on the behaviour of the police officials and also asked them whether women police accompanied them.

The women claimed that police broke into their homes at midnight and misbehaved them while taking the men into custody.

They also complained that electricity was cut off during the police presence. The officials tried to extract information whether any medical help was provided. Earlier, the NHRC directed the Chief Secretary and the DGP to submit a report within two weeks on the incident along with the details of persons taken into custody and the status of FIRs.





### Pharma dreams face farmers' wrath

Land acquisition for a Pharma Village project in the constituency of Telangana's Chief Minister has sparked violent protests from farmers and tribals, culminating in the attack on Vikarabad District Collector and other government officials in Lagcheria village. With over a dozen tribals arrested in connection with the incident, local residents, fearing police action, are fleeing their homes. P. Laxma Reddy and N. Ravi Kumar analyse the unfolding drama

he approach to Lagcherla village, nearly J30 lam from Hyderabad, is under lockdown-like security. Multiple police checkpoints have been set up along the Tunkumetla-Kongi road, where vehicles are stopped, and identification is meticulously scrutinised before allowing further access. The intensified measures follow the November 12 attack or Vikarabad District Collector Prateck Jan Kodangal Area Development Authority (KADA) Special Officer K. Venkat Reddy, and other government-ficials by locals during a contentious public hearing.

ficials by locals during a contentious public locaring.

The hearing, held to discuss land a contistion for a proposed "Pharma Village" project by the Telangana government, turned chaotic when residents, mainly from Roti Banda than-da and Pulisheru thanda - now part of Roti Banda thanda gram panchayat - allegedly attacked the officials. The indicent, the first of its kind on this scale in Telangana, has sparked outrage among government officials and ministers alike.

Lagetheria, a sleepy village T km from Turi-

and ministers alike.
Lugadetal, a sleepy village 17 km from Tun-kumeta in Kodangal Assembly constituency represented by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, now resembles a war zone. Police per-sonnel and barricades dominate the land-scape, and tensions, though under control,

linger. This village is bome to around 3,000 people of various communities.

Official sources say the acquisition plan involves 1,388 acres of land, including 547 acres of assigned land, 90 acres of government land, and 721 acres of private holdings Around 800 farmers, mainly from poor and tribal communities, stand to lose their land and are seeking compensation of €30 lakh per acre, citing loss of livelihood and generational land. The area is considered one of the more backward regions of the State, plaqued by aird dimatic conditions.

Government officials, for their part, reportedly proposed a Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) package that includes financial aid of ₹10 lakh per acre, a house under the Infaramma housing scheme, and a 125-squareyard plot for every acre of land surrendered. However, farmers argue that the compensation undervalues their land and does not acount for the socio-economic impact of displacement. But officials maintain the project is crucial for industrial development and employment generation, with promises of further negotiations to address farmers grievanness. These calks, however, ended in chaos, with farmers attacking officials during a public hearing.

Escalation of simmering tension

For over eight months, landowners from Lagcherla, Roti Banda thanda, and Pulicheru thanda had been opand runcheru thanda had been op-posing the project. Their resistance peaked during the planned boycott of the November 12 public hearing, marked by a "Nanta-Vasaru" protest – a symbolic form of agitation remi-niscent of the Telangana statehood movement. "When the Collector arrived without pol-ice protection, protesters began chasing and attacking him with sticks. People of our vil-lage were not involved, it was mainly those from nearly thandas and outsiders," an elder-ly resident says. Patolla Ravinder Reddy, evemember of the Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency, al-tributes the turnoul or disastifaction with the

rations favinder Reiddy, eximeniber of the Mandal Parishal Territorial Constituency, attributes the turmoil to dissatisfaction with the compensation package. "Landowners were offered (10 lash per are: and 125 square yards of house site per are; but the market value is E25 lash even in the village, while roadside land is valued at 250-60 lash per acre. Many would be willing to part with their land if the government offered '15 lash per acre,' he said, accusing officials and local Congress leaders, including the Chief Minister's brother, A. Turupsthi Reddy, of 'mishandling' the situation.

er, A. Trupath Reddy, of 'mishandling' the situation.

Protests escalated into violence when a mob attacked officials near a tear, 2 Inn from Lagcherla village. Police and KADA Special Officer Venker Reddy, Additional Collector Linges Naik, and Villarabad DSP Srinivas Reddy was esceeptly in just.

Subsequently, authorities arrested several supects, including former Branz Roahtrs Samith (9RS) MLA from Kodangal Patram Narender Reddy and local BSP leader Boginnoni Suresh Raj, both accused of inciting violence for political gain, allegedly at the behiest of BSS working president and Suralla MLA KT. Rams Ros. Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venhan Reddy claimed individuals from neighbouring villages had been brought in to stir turners.

from neighbouring villages had been rorougn in to sit urners. So far, 24 persons, including members of the Lambada fribe, have been arrested, and police are identifying more suspects. Cases have been registered under various sections, including attempted monder and obstruction of official duties. IGP Multi Zone-II V. Satyanaryana revealed that 19 of the 50 suspects identified do not own land in the village. Meanwhile, Additional DGP (Law & Order) Mahesh M. Bhagwat has launched an inquiry

into the incident. The government transferred Pargi DSP Karumasagar to the DGP office-due to his alleged flailure to prevent the incident. A sensior police officer notes that the DSP could have stopped the officials from leaving their tents, and his absence during the attack was cited as a major lapse.

Farmers and villagers have expressed frustration over alleged provocation, inadequate compensation, and police excesses. Rathod Lamin, 67, a farmer from Roti Banda thanda, says, "Compensation of EU lakh per acre is insufficient when even half an acre cannot be purchased for that amount."

The unrest has drawn the attention of rights activists, Opposition leaders, the State SCST Commission, who have called for action against alleged police brutality. On November 18, National ST Commission member Jatoth Hussain Nak visited the area to hear the villagers' grievances. The villagers claimed they were unsware of the Collector's presence during the protest and alleged police misconduct, including harassment and indecent behaviour during midnight searches. cluding harassment and during midnight search

#### Political colour

during midnight searches.

Political colour
The agitation against land acquisition intensified on October 25, when Congress Mandal president A. Shelshar was locked in the gram panchayat office by villagers. He was accused of threatening residents of Roit Bands thanda to part with their lands in exchange for 'paltry' compensation. Shedhar is said to be a key supporter of the CM.

The mention of Rama Rao in the remand report of ee MLA Narender Reddy has intensified political tensions. The report alleges that the latter, under Rama Rao's direction, masterminded the attack on November 12, describing it as 'triminal conspiracy'. Police claim Narender Reddy confessed to receiving assurances of protection from a 'prominent party leader'. However, both the BRS and legal experts have dismissed the claims as politically motivated.

Further, concerns have been raised over the inadequate police presence at Lagcherla, despite rising tensions over land acquisition for the proposed pharma village. Congress leaders, including CM Revanth Reddy, have openly blamed the BRS for the incident, and accused them of being "anti-development" for obstructing the project. In contrast, BRS leaders, including Rama Rao, led delegations to New Delhi to meet with the ST Commission and other startutory bodies. Meanwhile, tribal farmers, accused of attacking the Collector, met with Telangan State Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes chatman Bakid Venkatalah, accompanied by MLC Sayayavath Rathod. They alleged police brutality during their arrests.

Venkatalah assured the farmers of justice while Rathod called for registering teaces against police officials under the

Venkatalah assured the farmers of jus-tice while Rathod called for registering cases against police officials under the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, accusing the government of unfairly tar-geting tribals.

Telangana BIP president and Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy has demanded action against the culprits, while ensur-ing protection of farmers. Malkagini MP Eatala Rajender has raised the issue with the National Human Rights Commission, alleging third-degree torture of farmers in police custody.

Land acquisition for projects remains a sensitive issue, regardless of the pro-

ject's purpose or promises of a relatively high-er compensation and job opportunities for fa-milies relinquishing their land. Hyderabad Pharma City is not the first project in Telanga-na to face opposition in recent years, but what sets it apart is the government's focus on developing an at-scale, integrated, and one-of-its-kind facility.

Land acquisition vs industrial growth
The project's features helped fuel interest
among prospective investors and also contributed to stoking opposition, especially given
the pharma industry's reputation as a poliuter and a few research studies holding it ressible for anti-microbial resistant ba

ter and a few research studies holding it respossible for anti-microbial resistant bacteria
in water bodies near Hyderabad. Thus, it
came as no surptise when Rama Rao, as then
Industries Minister ahead of the first public
hearing for the project in October 2017,
stressed that "utmost care" will be taken to
safeguard erwironment and handle pollution
"very efficient",
"We are setting ourselves up for scrutiny,"
he had declared, outlining the project's scope
– spread over 19,333 acres, with 646,000crore investment and direct job creation for
17 lakh people. However, the road to implementation has been fraught with challenges,
including legal disputes over land acquisition,
the COVID-19 pandernic, and inadequate 6nancial support from the Centre, all of which
delayed its rollout ahead of 2023 State Assembly electrions.

delayed is rollout ahead of 2023 State As-sembly elections. The Congress party, which had opposed the ambitious project, wasted no time scrap-ping it after coming to power. However, with thousands of acres already acquired by the previous BRS government, fully abandoning the project proved challenging for the new administration. As a result, the Revanth Red-dy-led government scrapped the Pharma City but unveiled plans to establish a clutch of smaller pharma clusters across the State. It was decided to call those Pharma Villages; as city' implied scale. "These [pharma villages] will be smaller in size and decentralised in different parts of the State and in all directions," Special Chile Secretary for Industries and IT, Jayesh Ranjan says.

The other the behind this shift is to avaid.

esh Ranjan says. The objective behind this shift is to avoid The objective behind this shift is to avoid concentrating the pharma industry in one area, which could exacerbate pollution. Ran-jan, however, charifees that this does not mean there will be no pharma industry in the form-en Hyderabad Pharma City area. "Since land has been acquired, we have decided that in the ent while Pharma City also, a minimum of two but more also, if situation warrants, pharma villages will be established. As of now we plan to start two pharma villages of 2,000 acres each in the Pharma City fibere is more demand, we will do one more or two... one difference between the earlier proposed pharma city and the villages is only green category pharma untils will be permitted; he explained. The villages will also feature logistics facilities, R&D labs, training centres, and manufacturing units.

ties facilities, R&D labs, training centres, and manufacturing units.

Industries Stinister in the Congress government, D. Srichar Babu underscored this point when responding to media queries about the pharma village projects. He recently chained a review meeting where several drugmakers, including Aurobindo Pharma, MSG Group, and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, sepressed interest in setting up green pharma units on 50-acre plots within these villages.

The first two pharma villages being planned will focus on formulations, bio-similars, research, and vaccines, and not manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), says Ranjan.

However, given the demand for APIs and

says Ranjan. However, given the demand for APIs and the Indian government's push to enhancing domestic production of raw materials, future pharma vallages may include API manufacturing truits. "Unlike in the past, where API Imanufacturing meant huge contamination of groundwater, the technology has now advanced quite a bit to allow for cleaner processes!," Ranjan explains.

He also emphasises that the Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) norm would be mandatory, with the government establishing state-of-the-art common effluent treatment plants (CETPs) to cause proper effluent management. Interestingly, the Hyderabad Pharma CIIy also had ZLD and CETP armong pollution commol measures.

Each company within these pharma villages will be required to set up his own ZLD facility. "There will be no liquid discharge and whatever effluents are coming will be reasted through a government created facility. So, we are not leaving anything to chance," Ranjan adds.

This approach is in contrast with previous er, given the demand for APIs and

notes.

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practices, where companies in existing pharma parks in and around Hyderabad, such as

practices, where companies in estisting pharma parks in and around Hyderabad, such as those in Pashamylaram and Patancheru, were left to develop their own effuent treatment plants, leading to inconsistent management and contamination. The government had earlier expressed intent to relocate all pharma units within the Outer Ring Road to the proposed Hyderabad Pharma City.

Ranjan says while district collectors have been advised to identify locations for the remaining 7-8 pharma villages, "we don't have any guarantee on the timeline. But in the case of the erstwhile Pharma City, the moment we allot land to the seven companies (MSN, Aurobindo among, others), they will start construction."

As tensions over the Lagsherla incident turned into a turf war between the ruling Congress and opposition parties BRS and BIP, the Chief Minister announced land acquisition is must for development. "My government is taking care of those who have lost their land and are suffering. We have decided to triple the compensation value," he has said.



## Lagacherla row: NHRC team in TG

STATE BUREAU

Vikarabad

A three-member delegation from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) arrived in the district and interacted with the residents of Rotibanda thanda on Saturday. The delegation is also expected to visit Lagacherla and speak to the villagers.

The NHRC had taken cognisance of a complaint alleging harassment, torture and false implication of the villagers of Lagacherla after they protested against land acquisition for a pharma village project by the State government without following proper procedures.

Accordingly, the NHRC members are interacting with tribal farmers, women and others.

It may be recalled that National Commission for Scheduled Tribes member Jatothu Hussain Nayak had already visited Rotibanda thanda and Lagacherla last week. Apart from interacting with residents, he also spoke to the persons jailed in Sangareddy.

The NHRC had also issued notices to Chief Secretary A Santhi Kumari and Director General of Police (DGP), and sought a detailed report on the alleged atrocities on the farmers and women within two weeks.