

IPS Patil Ketan Baliram Made Additional Director, NCB

<https://indianmasterminds.com/news/ips-news/ips-patil-ketan-baliram-made-additional-director-ncb/>

Amidst a recent development, Mr. Patil Ketan Baliram (2010 batch Punjab cadre IPS officer), the incumbent Deputy Inspector General of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), was mandated to assume office as an Additional Director in the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) from the date of joining the post and upto 26th December 2027.

Tribal women tortured during hunt for Veerappan pledge support for Annie Raja in Kerala

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/kerala/keralatribal-women-tortured-during-hunt-for-veerappan-pledge-support-for-annie-raja-kerala>

A group of women, tortured for allegedly protecting forest brigand Veerappan, a charge they were acquitted of, were in Kerala's Wayanad to support Annie Raja, the candidate of the Left for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

After a few minutes of talking about their lives, Chinnaponnu says she has a headache, and that it happens every time she thinks of the past. She has just spoken of the nearly nine years that she and other women with her had spent in a Mysore jail, while their husbands or other members of the family were killed in police torture. Chinnaponnu is one of the 89 victims identified by the National Human Rights Commission as tortured by the Joint Special Task Force of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, in their attempts to catch the late forest brigand Veerappan. They were imprisoned and tortured for allegedly protecting Veerappan upon charges which could not be proved and acquitted years later.

"I was taken in 1993 and released in 2001. I spent more than eight and a half years there, and so did these women. Several of our husbands were shot dead. We were tortured in different ways," she says, pointing to a group of people with her. Bhanumathy, Ponnarassi, Nirmathi, Nallamma, and Sarassu stand next to her in a room they are lodging at in Kerala's Wayanad where they came to support the candidate of the Left for the Lok Sabha election, Annie Raja.

Annie Amma, they say, has helped them a lot in their fight for justice. In 2007, six years after their release, the NHRC announced an interim relief of Rs 2.8 crore to the 89 victims, after a panel headed by Justice AJ Sadashiva conducted an inquiry and submitted their report. Seventeen years later, some of the women have still not received the amount. "With Amma's intervention, we have been able to approach several offices, including that of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin, to get the money. Now we have been assured we will get it soon," Chinnaponnu says.

An Amnesty International report of 2021 says that 13 of the 89 victims in Karnataka did not receive their compensation, while 104 more victims were identified by human rights organisations as victims of torture and assault but were allegedly not considered by the inquiry panel.

"And this is only the interim relief, the full settlement should come later," Chinnaponnu says. She is talking about the Rs 7.2 crore remaining in the 10 crore rupees allotted by the governments of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, during Veerappan's infamous kidnap of Kannada actor Rajkumar. The kidnap was meant to secure the release of all the prisoners tortured on charges of protecting Veerappan. But there was also a ransom. Both the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka governments issued orders to pay the Rs 10 crore

total ransom demanded by the bandit as compensation for the victims of police torture. After this, Rajkumar, who spent 108 days in the custody of Veerappan, was released in November 2000. Months later, Chinnaponnu and the other women were released from jail.

But many of them were so lost they were like “dead people walking”, she says. “Many of our families would not accept us, saying that we were sexually assaulted by policemen. We were so numb it felt like we were dead,” she says of the trauma.

| A Telegraph [report](#) of 2004 mentioned electric shocks and repeated instances of sexual assault, most of which the women deposed before the inquiry panel. It made it difficult to even find work and sustain a livelihood.

But they found their way through life, and several NGOs and humanitarians had helped them. In the same breath that they speak highly of Annie Raja, they also vouch for the Congress party, dropping names like Sonia Gandhi and Indira Gandhi. “In our place, we will vote for the Congress. Here, Annie Amma should come to power,” Chinnaponnu says.

Restrict Bengal Minister s movements on polling day: Nisith Pramanik urges EC

<https://www.socialnews.xyz/2024/04/17/restrict-bengal-ministers-movements-on-polling-day-nisith-pramanik-urges-ec/>

Kolkata, April 17 (SocialNews.XYZ) Union Minister of State for Home Affairs and BJP's sitting MP from Cooch Behar, Nisith Pramanik, on Wednesday, appealed to the Election Commission (EC) to restrict the movement of West Bengal Minister in charge of North Bengal Development Udayan Guha on Friday when the constituency goes to polls in the first phase.

Besides being the state minister, Guha is also a heavyweight party legislator from the Dinhata Assembly constituency, one of the seven under Cooch Behar Lok Sabha.

Sources in the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said that in his application to the Commission, Pramanik has claimed that Guha had been instrumental in orchestrating an attack on him twice even after the model code of conduct came into force.

In his application, Pramanik has also claimed that Guha's name featured in the report of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on the post-poll violence in West Bengal after the 2021 Assembly elections.

Claiming that Guha had been ill-famous for spreading hate messages, Parmanik has requested the commission to ensure that Guha is unable to step out of his locality on polling day.

Last month, a video went viral where both Guha and Pramanik were seen dashing against each other during a scuffle between the BJP and Trinamool Congress supporters.

The incident took place when Pramanik's convoy was passing through an area, where Trinamool Congress supporters had assembled to celebrate Guha's birthday. A scuffle broke out between the two groups and in an attempt to disperse the angry supporters of both sides, Dhiman Mitra, the local sub-divisional police officer also sustained injuries

Two Unnatural Deaths Of Most Critically Endangered Tribals In Mining Areas of Jharkhand, NTPC Maintains Complete Silence On Loss Of Lives

<https://indianpsu.com/two-unnatural-deaths-of-primitive-tribals-in-ntpc-mining-areas-of-jharkhand-ntpc-maintains-complete-silence-on-loss-of-lives/>

After Kirni Birhor, Bahadur Birhor dies due to health hazards of mining, primitive tribe Birhor community holds NTPC and its MDO Rithwik- AMR Consortium responsible for these deaths

The mining beast, unleashed by NTPC's Mine Developer and Operator (MDO), the Rithwik-AMR Consortium, is regularly thumping on the doors of the most critically endangered Birhor community in Chatti Bariatu Coal Mines,, where the orgy of death does not seem to abate. Two unnatural deaths have been reported from this area within the last six weeks.

After the death of minor girl, Kirni Birhor on 28th February, 2024, serious questions were raised on NTPC and the district administration. But instead of identifying the reasons behind the incident and the people responsible for this, they were seen making excuses rather than shifting the colony of primitive Birhor tribals, to some other safer place to live.

This matter had not dies down when the report came that 36-year-old Bahadur Birhor, died at 3 am on April 10. After the death of Bahadur Birhor, the angry people of Birhor community completely shut down NTPC's Chatti Bariatu coal plant in protest from 6:00 in the morning till 1:00 in the afternoon. The OB Burden coal mining and coal transportation work in the mines was completely stopped. People of Birhor community were demanding that the people responsible behind the death of the youth, to come forward and discuss measures to be taken to shift them away from the area where there is rampant coal mining going on. Family members of the deceased said that due to the proximity of mines, dust, pollution and heavy blasting, Bahadur Birhor died.

It was on February 28, last, Kirni Birhor, a resident of Pagar Birhor Colony near NTPC's Chatti Bariatu Coal Mines area, had died under suspicious circumstances. The district administration swung into action after requests were made from the state government to the central government to investigate the death of Kirani Birhor.

A large section of the society and many social organizations are raising questions on the death of people of Birhor community living near the Chatti Bariatu Coal Mines area. Almost two years have passed since the opening of NTPC's Chatti Bariatu Coal Mines, but why till date no meaningful initiative has been taken to re-settle the people of Birhor community to safer places, away from mining area.

NHRC takes cognizance of the matter

In the meantime, social activist and whistle blower of the area, Mr. Mantu Soni alias Shani Kant, has approached the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), on April 12, 2024, in the case of the abnormal death of the minor tribal girl, Kirni Birhor, who died under mysterious circumstances on 28th February, 2024. The NHRC, taking cognizance of the matter, has asked the Deputy Commissioner of Hazaribagh to take action in the case and report back to the NHRC within eight weeks.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs also swings into action

The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs has also taken up this matter seriously and has written a letter to the Chief Secretary of Jharkhand in this regard.

Is cost of a Human Life simply peanuts

While the Birhor community, a primitive tribe standing on the threshold of extinction, faces the backlash of illegal coal mining in Jharkhand, the farce is that dependents of the deceased (if any) are promised a paltry Rs. 5,000 per month for living, one adult member is given one time cash compensation ranging between Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 30,000, along with “free cremation” of the deceased and a promise of a job to one adult in the family.

Rampant, illegal and unplanned mining – a threat to rivers, flora and fauna

There have been earlier reports with pictorial evidence that the flora and fauna of Chatti Bariatu area is under constant threat from the rampant, illegal and unplanned mining by the MDO, which is just seems to be interested in finishing its mining targets well in time. Though promises were made, that the Birhor community tribals would be shifted to a safer place once mining starts, promises remain unkept as usual.

Moreover, there is clear-cut evidence blockage of at least one kilometer of “Chotki Nadi” with Over Burden (OB), which has stopped the natural flow of water from the river. But due to reasons better known to local authorities, no one seems to care either about the lives of the tribe nearing extinction, not about the damage to the local river, which happens to be the life-line of the area and its residents.

Birhors : ‘Most Critically Endangered’ ethnic group according to UNESCO

Counted among the ‘Most Critically Endangered’ ethnic group among the eight ‘primitive tribes’ of Jharkhand, Birhors constitute only about 0.01 percent of the total tribal population of India and their main concentration is in Jharkhand. According to UNESCO, the Birhor tribe in Jharkhand is “critically endangered” with only 2,000 speakers remaining. The Birhor are one of the smallest primitive tribes of Jharkhand, and according to the 2011 census, there are only around 5,000 Birhor people in the state. Birhor is also listed by UNESCO as an endangered language.

Near NTPC’s Chatti Bariatu Coal Mines area, where mining is being done by M/s. Rithwik-AMR Consortium, there is a population of 250 persons belonging to the Birhor community and about 40 of these are children.

Several email to Mr. Rithwik Ramesh, President of Rithwik Projects Private Limited, did not receive any reply. An email sent to CMD NTPC, Shri Gurdeep Singh and Secretary (Power) Government of India, Shri Pankaj Agarwal, also met the same fate. An email sent to the Corporate Communications Division of NTPC, also elicited no response.

Life off-track for railway workers in Kerala

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/life-off-track-for-railway-workers/article68079560.ece>

Track maintainers, gatekeepers, loco pilots, train guards, and travelling ticket examiners are all key to ensuring the safety of trains. However, they work in hostile environments without basic facilities, which often put their health and sometimes their life at risk

Earlier in April, hundreds of people turned up for the funeral of V. Vinod, in Ernakulam, in central Kerala. A travelling ticket examiner (TTE), he was allegedly pushed off the Ernakulam-Patna Express a fortnight ago by a man travelling ticketless as it was passing through Thrissur district. Vinod and his mother had just moved into their new home in February. He was due to return from his trip and attend a temple festival.

“Vinod and I worked together for 20 years,” says Justin J., a fellow TTE and the Kochi branch secretary of the Southern Railway Mazdoor Union (SRMU), a recognised union in Railways. Vinod was the treasurer. “He was committed to duty always, but above all he was an artist. He had done some but notable roles in more than a dozen movies alongside superstars such as Mammooty and Mohanlal,” Joseph remembers.

“TTEs face intimidation by ticketless and intoxicated travellers; people pressure them for the train to stop at non-designated stations, and waitlisted passengers and those with RAC (reservation against cancellation) tickets often harass them,” says V. Anilkumar, general secretary of SRMU, which has over 70,000 employees as members. He says while most TTEs, including women, are mandated to verify credentials of passengers on three coaches, there are 24-coach trains with just one TTE.

SRMU, a recognised union, organised demonstrations and commemoration meetings at Ernakulam Junction railway station and at other stations in Kerala and Tamil Nadu seeking steps to ensure the safety of TTEs across the two States, where the South Railway’s jurisdiction extends.

It’s not just TTEs though. The working conditions of track maintainers, gatekeepers, loco pilots, train guards (now called train managers), in all over one lakh employees — all engaged in operational and safety duties — need an overhaul of working conditions, for their own health and safety.

Health and safety compromised

Ligi (name changed), 35, among the around 30,000 track maintainers of the Southern Railway, walks up to 20 km each day. Like her colleagues in Kottayam, she keeps a close watch on the condition of tracks and tightens fish-plate bolts and other track components, come rain or shine.

She carries a pair of red flags, a green flag, and 10 detonators to attract the attention of colleagues/train crew in case of an emergency, apart from the tools needed to maintain the track for smooth service. She is often at the mercy of local residents when she feels

like using the restroom, since the 'gang room', a shelter for track maintainers to rest, is almost always far away.

"Many residents turn away track maintainers and those engaged in 'keyman' jobs, telling them it is the Railway's duty to provide them with toilets. So many of us have urinary and other health problems," she says. "The worst part is that the condition of toilets attached to most gang rooms is worse than that of cattle sheds, with water in short supply. Personnel deployed for keyman duty along the track have to bear the additional burden of heavy bags [for equipment]." She adds that the engineering wing she is a part of is the lifeline of Railways, vested with the prime task of ensuring the safe movement of trains.

Many like her rue that railway doctors are most often reluctant to issue a 'sick certificate' and instead recommend 'medication while on duty' to avoid granting them leave. While seeking promotion opportunities for track-maintenance workers — comprising even post-graduates — Sarathkumar S., chairperson of the engineering council of SRMU, laments that those who complain about working conditions, extended hours of work, and the unwillingness to grant sick leave, are often unduly punished by their supervisory officials.

Track maintenance personnel have the added risk of being mowed down by unexpected arrival of trains, mainly during inclement weather. "Around 300 of our colleagues die each year due to this reason alone. Our demand for walkie-talkies to get live alerts on train movement and contact personnel from remote areas in case of emergency has fallen on deaf ears," says Sarathkumar.

Worrying working conditions

Even the newly-launched Vande Bharat trains do not have toilets for loco pilots and train guards, says Priya (name changed), a loco pilot. This, despite the **National Human Rights Commission** directing Railways in 2016 to provide air-conditioning and toilets in the engine room.

"We are posted on goods trains during our early days in service. There have been occasions when I have worked 15 hours and served in excess of the 72-hour outstation duty, since there is major delay in filling vacancies. The situation is only a little better on passenger trains. The child-care leave that women personnel can avail themselves of for up to two years is seldom given," she rues, having faced a similar situation herself.

She narrates the harrowing time women loco pilots have, especially during their menstrual cycle. "There have been occasions during my two-decade stint when I soiled my clothes. Railways must build staff-only toilets at signal points, to end this misery."

A train guard with about five years of service remembers an incident from 10 years ago, when a woman who was five months pregnant fell unconscious while on duty at a railway yard in Kerala. "Things have not improved since then," she says.

“It is tough to seek help from the RPF [Railway Protection Force] and police personnel on board, unless they give us their phone number when boarding the train,” she adds.

Another train guard cites the urgent need for a weekly day off, adequate rest, family time, and leave for the operational staff, especially since they have extended working hours (up to 72 hours a week) and also witness suicides and deaths on rail tracks. “The silver lining is that we now have AC rest rooms, that were readied after years of agitation.”

Anilkumar says it’s tough for women gatekeepers in remote locations, as they have to be vigilant against sexual assaults. “There have been occasions when some of them were accompanied by their husbands until their duty hours got over. Both men and women track-maintaining staff are highly vulnerable to attacks by inebriated people too. Those who seek safety measures from Railways are often termed as anti-government,” he laments.

Asking in many different ways

For decades, railway engineering wing officials have been crying foul, through memoranda and strikes, about the sub-human working conditions and the delay in filling vacancies, including of track-maintenance staff, despite its direct implication on the safety of trains.

A keyman attempted suicide in Kollam in 2022, alleging in a suicide note that he was being forced to do additional work and harassed by an official who supervised the people on track-upkeep duty.

Railway personnel have been expressing alarm internally and through the media, at how being continuously deployed for track upkeep for 20 km could lead to reduced alertness levels. They also flag the delay in filling vacancies, despite the increase in track length and the number of trains.

The working conditions of catering staff, most hailing from other States, is even worse, mainly because most of them are contract personnel.

The All India Loco Running Staff Association (AILRSA) has warned of strengthening its agitation that began last year demanding a weekly rest and recuperation day, a toilet in the engine room, and rationalisation of working hours. “The non-availability of toilet often prompts loco pilots, including women, from drinking adequate water, despite the sweltering heat in the engine room. Railways must also fill the 16,000 loco pilot vacancies, since extended working hours could result in fatigue,” says Harish P.K., zonal organising secretary of AILRSA.

Optimal use of manpower: Railways

Terming most of the concerns of operational and safety personnel as ‘part of their job, railway sources say the emphasis has been on optimal use of manpower in order to prevent escalation of operational expenses. That does not mean that vacancies will

remain unfilled. There is an action plan, including to fill vacancies and build more number of crew-only toilets along rail corridors.“

All personnel are well paid and there are forums within Railways where they can redress their grievances regarding working conditions. It is a known fact that the workload, especially of loco pilots and guards, increases and they might have to work on their weekly off day, especially during Sabarimala pilgrimage season when more special trains operate to Kerala. They can avail themselves of compensatory off later on, while their demand to return to the base station within two days will have to be looked into.

They get extra allowance if they have to work away from their base station for more than two days. With tracks being strengthened in order to increase the speed of trains in Kerala, personnel will get the benefit of more hours of rest when trains reach their destination faster. On the demand for toilet within the loco engine, the sources say loco pilots can well use the toilets at major railway stations , where trains halt for approximately five minutes, while passing through Kerala.

On track maintainers

On incidents of track maintainers being fatally knocked down by trains – the latest at the Piravom Road section a week ago, they say most track maintainers can make out a train coming from afar, from sounds and vibrations. “Accidents occur mostly when they are absentminded or when a train comes unexpected, even as another is crossing a point,” they say, quoting safety officers.

Likewise, track maintainers now have a relatively better working atmosphere since trains now have biotoilets and tracks are much cleaner. Understandably, many operational and safety personnel are unable to cope with the stress triggered when they witness death and accidents on the tracks. They join the job after being trained in managing and coping with such situations. But it will be difficult to heed to their demand not to deploy them during noon time in the summer season as this will have implications on rail safety, say the sources.

They say the workload of TTEs has lessened, post the introduction of hand-held tablets. This is quite a change from the days when they used to carry paper reservation charts having details of passengers. Taking into account frequent incidents of stand-off with migrant workers and unruly passengers, there is now better awareness about how to tackle such situations. This has been re-emphasised following the recent death of a TTE who was pushed out of a moving train. Both the RPF and Government Railway Police personnel have stepped up vigil.

Railways have also lessened duty hours of gatekeepers at level-crossings from 12 hours to eight hours, considering the increased work load due to operation of more trains after track doubling was completed through Kottayam, among other places, they say.

Fake encounter in Godda ! युवक को गोली मारने वाले एसआई गया जेल,थाना प्रभारी सस्पेंड,गोड्डा में पुलिस की गोली से हुई थी पहाड़िया युवक की मौत....

<https://jharkhand-news.com/fake-encounter-in-godda-asi-who-shot-the-youth/>

गोड्डा।झारखण्ड के गोड्डा जिले के सुंदरपहाड़ी थाना क्षेत्र के डांगापाड़ा गांव में बुधवार की शाम पुलिस की गोली से ही युवक हरिनारायण पहाड़िया की मौत हुई थी। इस संबंध में गोड्डा पुलिस की ओर से जारी प्रेस विज्ञप्ति के अनुसार, युवक को गोली लगने मामले में पुलिस की लापरवाही सामने आयी है। इस संबंध में एसपी ने त्वरित कार्रवाई करते हुए दोषी एसआई राजनाथ यादव को गिरफ्तार कर उसे जेल भेज दिया है।वहीं पूरे मामले में लापरवाही बरतने के आरोप में थाना प्रभारी रामसूरत यादव को तत्काल प्रभाव से निलंबित कर दिया गया है। मामले की जांच के लिए एसडीपीओ जेपीएन चौधरी के नेतृत्व एसआईटी गठित कर दी गयी है।वहीं **राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग** के निर्देश पर गुरुवार की सुबह मेडिकल बोर्ड गठित कर शव का पोस्टमार्टम कराया गया। पोस्टमार्टम की वीडियोग्राफी भी करायी गयी। इधर, सुंदरपहाड़ी में भारी संख्या में पुलिस बलों की नियुक्ति की गयी है।जिला आर्म्स गार्ड सहित एसएसबी के जवानों की तैनाती की गयी है।इस मामले में सुंदरपहाड़ी थाना कांड संख्या 26/24 में धारा 304 एवं 25 (9) के तहत मामला दर्ज किया गया है।

इधर, गोलीकांड में हरिनारायण पहाड़िया की मौत को लेकर गुरुवार को पहाड़िया आदिम जनजाति की ओर से जोरदार विरोध किया गया। सुंदरपहाड़ी प्रखंड के सामने तथा मृतक के गांव डांगापाड़ा में शव को लेकर पहुंची एंबुलेंस के सामने ग्रामीणों ने विरोध किया।शव को एंबुलेंस से उतरने नहीं दे रहे थे।इसके बाद जिला प्रशासन के अधिकारी, एसडीपीओ जेपीएन चौधरी, सांसद विजय हांसदा व पहाड़िया नेता सिमोन मालतो के बीच एक घंटे से ज्यादा समय तक वार्ता हुई।वार्ता में परिजनों को 10 लाख मुआवजा तथा परिवार के किसी एक सदस्य को सरकारी नौकरी देने पर सहमति बनी।वहीं इस मामले में दोषी पर कार्रवाई करने की मांग भी की गयी। इसके बाद पहाड़िया परिवार के द्वारा शव को बड़ा डांगापाड़ा गांव ले जाया गया।

घटना बुधवार की शाम करीब 7 बजे की है। जानकारी के अनुसार, सुंदरपहाड़ी थाना पुलिस एक माह पूर्व जेल से छूट कर बाहर बेनाडिक हेंब्रम को पकड़ने के लिए छापेमारी करने गांव पहुंची थी।बेनाडिक के खिलाफ रंगदारी व भयादोहन करने का मामला दर्ज हुआ था।इस समय हरिनारायण पहाड़िया शौच के लिए नदी किनारे गया हुआ था। एसपी के अनुसार, पुलिस को देखते ही वह भागने लगा। एसआई राजनाथ यादव ने उसे रुकने को कहा, लेकिन वह भागने लगा। इसी धर-पकड़ में गोली चली, जो हरिनारायण के कंधे में जा लगी। इलाज के दौरान सुंदरपहाड़ी अस्पताल में उसकी मौत हो गयी

इधर गोड्डा के एसपी नाथुसिंह मीणा ने कहा कि पुलिस द्वारा एक मामले में गिरफ्तारी के दौरान यह घटना घटी है। हरिनारायण के कंधे में गोली लगी थी। इलाज के दौरान मौत हो गयी। दोषी एसआई राजनाथ यादव को तत्काल प्रभाव से निलंबित करते हुए जेल भेज दिया गया है। वहीं थाना प्रभारी को भी कार्य में लापरवाही बरतने के मामले में निलंबित कर दिया गया है। पूरे मामले में अनुसंधान के लिए एसआईटी का गठन किया गया है। यह टीम एसडीपीओ के नेतृत्व में काम करेगी। पूरे प्रकरण की सूचना मानवाधिकार आयोग को भी दी गयी है।