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## RTI activist found dead near his home in Odisha's Kendrapara

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HT Correspondent Hindustan Times, Bhubaneswa





RTI activist found dead



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dead, another RTI activist in Odisha was found murdered outside h house in coastal Kendrapara district on Saturda

The body of Ranjan Kumar Das, a 35-year-old RTI activist known f filing multiple RTI applications in connection with sever irregularities in Kendrapara district, was found just about 2 km from his home in Beruan village this morning. Das was supposed to return home last night, but did not come back. His body with multiprinjuries on the face along with his motorcycle was found in a ditch the road this morning

"We have lodged a case of murder against unknown miscreants. V are still waiting for the post-mortem report to conclude that tl deceased was murdered," said Kalindi Behera, inspector c Marshaghai police station. Das is survived by his parents, his wi and 4-year-old son

Das had taken to RTI activism about 8 years ago filing a series applications seeking information about different government schemes in the district. Well-known RTI activist Pradip Pradhan, whad visited his home on Saturday, alleged that Das was regular receiving death threats for seeking information including on the numerous brick kilns that had sprung up illegally. "Last month had parents received death threats asking them to keep Das' activis under check," said Pradhan

Recently, he had lodged a case before the Odisha Lokayukta allegi



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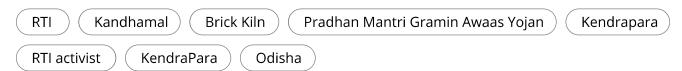
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well as irregularities in government schemes such as Pradhan Mant Rozgar Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana, one of l family members said

Pradhan alleged that the RTI activist was murdered by people wh did not like his filing of RTI applications seeking details of corruptic cases.

In December last year, Abhimanyu Panda, a 58-year-old RTI activ of Kandhamal district was shot dead by unidentified persons while he was standing in front of his house. Though it was initial suspected that Panda's RTI activism was the reasonfor the murdapolice said he was killed over the ongoing dispute over a shop inside the local Jagannath temple complex. Police arrested five peop including two contract killers for their alleged involvement in the murder.

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