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

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 HT Correspondent
Hindustan Times, Bhubaneswa



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

The body of Ranjan Kumar Das, a 35-year-old RTI activist known for filing multiple RTI applications in connection with several 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 multiple injuries on the face along with his motorcycle was found in a ditch by the road this morning

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

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

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



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department, quantity of dry food for babies in anganwadi centres as well as irregularities in government schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana, one of the family members said

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

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

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