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'Voice of justice' silenced

Chatra, Ranchi police to jointly probe CCL employee's shooting

Our Correspondent | Jun 09, 2018 00:00 IST



Suresh Oraon

Ranchi: Once a crusader, always a crusader - that would sum up who Suresh Oraon was.

The 30-year-old Central Coalfields (CCL) employee, who had invoked the RTI Act in his fight against displacement in the past, was shot five times (not six as reported earlier) during a meeting at Piparwar on Chatra-Ranchi border, 70km from the capital, on Thursday morning.

While Chatra police have formed two special teams to investigate the murder, whose motive is yet unclear.

The Telegraph India

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Three years ago, Oraon, then a full-fledged RTI crusader, was offered the job of a surveyor by CCL in lieu of his land. "Even while he was working at CCL, he was fighting for other land losers, many of whom were not given jobs by the coal PSU. Two months ago, he had staged a demonstration for local unemployed youths whose land had been acquired for mining," Ghosh recalled.

The social activist didn't mince words to say that Oraon might have been killed by the PSU or the mining mafia. "After all, my friend was a public figure who fought and won many battles against CCL (the Damodar pollution case) and several other private companies involved in mining operations. If he had won many friends, he had made enemies too. We want a judicial inquiry into his murder," Ghosh added.

Nazir Hussain, another associate of the deceased, said during anti-displacement agitations three years ago, Oraon had filed several RTI pleas against CCL and the local administration.

Chatra SP Akhilesh B. Variar said they had sought cooperation of Ranchi police to crack the murder. "The shooting took place on Khelari-Piparwar border. The assailants may have been hired from outside (Chatra). The motive is not known yet. We are investigating," he said.

A policeman in Chatra said the way five rounds were fired from close range indicated that whoever ordered Oraon's killing wanted to plug all chances of survival. "Also, he was murdered in a public place, where tribals met every week. That takes daring," the cop added.

Sources said the two unidentified bikers asked a local lad to call Oraon to a desolate spot near the meeting venue. Police neither confirmed nor denied that a boy was employed to trap the deceased.

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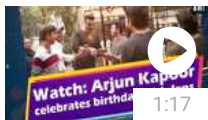


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