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# CM MAJHI INAUGURATED VFS GLOBAL VISA APPLICATION CENTRE IN BHUBANESWAR

Bhubaneswar April 1, 2026: Chief Minister Shri Mohan Charan Majhi today inaugurated the new Visa Application Centre operated by VFS Global in Bhubaneswar, marking a significant milestone in enhancing access to international visa services for the people of Odisha. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister highlighted that the establishment of this centre reflects Odisha's growing global connectivity and commitment to citizen-centric services. He noted that such initiatives enhance ease of travel, promote industries & tourism, and support international engagement. The CM said that there was a growing need for a Visa application centre in the State. Considering this need, the State Government had requested the central Government to facilitate opening up of such a centre in Bhubaneswar. We are happy that the central Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modiji has extended full support and cooperation in the opening of this centre here. He further said that the newly launched centre stands as a testimony to the growing demand for convenient and accessible visa services in the region. It will significantly benefit residents of Odisha, who previously had to travel to Kolkata to submit their visa applications. The state Government has provided approximately 3,000 square feet for this state-of-the-art facility inside the Baba Saheb Ambedkar Bus Terminal at Barmunda in the city, said the CM. In its first phase of operations, the CM informed that the centre will cater to visa services for the following ten countries: the United Kingdom, Ireland, Austria, Estonia, Italy, Malta, Switzerland, Japan, Morocco, and Egypt. Additional missions are expected to be introduced in the near future, further expanding the range of services available to applicants, he added.



Visa Services to Ten Countries in First Phase

Will Promote Industries, Tourism & Strengthen International Engagement

Reflects Odisha's Growing Global Connectivity & Commitment to Citizen-Centric Services-CM

The centre is designed to provide a seamless and efficient application experience to applicants. VFS Global currently provides visa services on behalf of 53 countries in India through a network of over 560 visa application centres across 20 cities.

Zubin Karkaria, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of VFS Global, has been instrumental in building the organization into the world's largest visa and consular services provider. Under his leadership, the company serves 70 governments across 167 countries, promoting innovation, responsible technology, and secure mobility solutions. As a global leader in trusted technology services, VFS Global supports governments and diplomatic missions worldwide by managing administrative and non-judgmental aspects of visa, passport, and consular services. This enables client governments to focus on critical decision-making processes. VFS Global operates more than 4,000 application centres in 167 countries and has processed over 537 million transactions since 2001. The inauguration of the Bhubaneswar centre marks another step forward in strengthening infrastructure for global mobility and improving ease of access for citizens across Odisha. Among others Embassy officials of Austria, Italy and Switzerland, Government Chief Whip Sri Saroj Pradhan, Home Department ACS Sri Hemant Sharma, ACS to CM Sri Saswat Mishra, and COO of VFS Global, South Asia Yummi Talwar were present.

## Strategic Urban Land Management Key to Viksit Odisha: ACS Usha Padhee

Bhubaneswar | 1st April, 2026: In a significant step towards strengthening the foundations of sustainable urbanisation, the Housing & Urban Development Department convened a high-level session on urban land management at Kharavela Bhawan underscoring the pivotal role of land as a strategic resource in Odisha's journey towards a Viksit Odisha. Shri Hari Ballav Mishra, IAS (Retd.), delivered a comprehensive presentation, drawing upon his extensive administrative experience to elucidate the evolving legal, administrative, and policy dimensions of urban land management. Setting the tone, Additional Chief Secretary H&UD and Chairperson IDCO

Smt Usha Padhee underscored that strategic and informed land management is central to building sustainable, future-ready cities and achieving the vision of a Viksit Odisha. She highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of land categories, regulatory frameworks, and innovative mechanisms such as land value capture to fully leverage urban land assets. The session covered key land categories in Odisha, including Nazul, Khasmahal, Government Khas Possession (GKPB), and leasehold cases, emphasising their optimal utilisation in a rapidly urbanising context. Director of Municipal Administration



Shri Arindam Dakua, all Additional Secretaries and other senior officials attended the session, which also saw active participation from Collectors, Municipal Commissioners, and officers from Revenue and GA Departments, both physically and virtually. Shri Mishra shared practical insights into legal and administrative aspects of land management, stressing clarity in legacy classifications and evolving policy frameworks.

The deliberations highlighted land value capture as a sustainable financing tool for urban infrastructure, with discussions focused on leveraging land resources for planned growth and improved service delivery. The Department reaffirmed its commitment to capacity building and knowledge-sharing to strengthen transparent and efficient urban land management across Odisha.

## Shri Shaktikanta Das Visits World Skill Center, Reviews Advanced Training Infrastructure

Bhubaneswar, April 4, 2026: Shri Shaktikanta Das, Principal Secretary to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, visited the World Skill Center (WSC), Bhubaneswar, today, reaffirming the growing national focus on advanced skill development as a cornerstone of India's economic transformation. Shri Das reviewed WSC's state-of-the-art Centres of Excellence in Vertical Transportation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration, Beauty & Wellness, and the School of Hospitality. He appreciated the institution's advanced infrastructure, modern training methodologies, and strong emphasis on industry-aligned, outcome-driven skill development. Smt. Anu Garg, IAS, Chief Secretary of Odisha, and Shri Bhupendra Singh Poonia, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Skill Development & Technical Education (SD&TE), Government of Odisha accompanied Shri Das during the visit. He engaged in interactions with WSC's senior leadership, including Shri Rashmi Ranjan Mohapatra, Chief Executive Officer; Shri Pinaki Patnaik, Additional Secretary, SD&TE and Chief Operating Officer, WSC and Dr. Subhanga Kishore Das, Principal. These discussions provided valuable



insights into Odisha's evolving skill landscape, showcasing WSC as a flagship institution driving excellence in technical education and training. Key deliberations revolved around enhancing workforce readiness of skilled talent pool, continuously improving the quality and relevance of training programs, and aligning skilling initiatives with emerging global industry demands. The importance of deepening collaboration between government, industry, and training institutions to ensure employment-oriented, future-focused skill de-

velopment was strongly emphasized. Shri Das' visit underscored the Government of Odisha's strategic vision to empower youth with cutting-edge skills, foster innovation in training delivery, and create better livelihood opportunities. The World Skill Center continues to play a transformative role in nurturing burgeoning talents, positioning Odisha as a hub of excellence in skill development and contributing significantly to India's journey towards inclusive growth and global competitiveness.

## Odisha Tops IndiaSkills 2025-26, Showcasing its Robust Skilling Ecosystem

Bhubaneswar, April 3, 2026: Odisha emerged as the top-performing state at the IndiaSkills 2025-26, securing the highest medal tally in the country with a total of 57 medals. The closing ceremony of the national championship was held at the India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida. Under the leadership of the Hon'ble Minister for Skill Development and Technical Education, Shri Sampad Chandra Swain, Odisha is strengthening youth empowerment and future-ready skill development to build a globally competitive talent pool for the industries of today and tomorrow. Congratulating the winners, the Minister highlighted that this achievement reflects the state's world-class training standards, a strong culture of skill excellence, and robust institutional support. He also expressed confidence that Odisha will continue to achieve



greater success on global platforms. Extending his congratulations, Bhupendra Singh Poonia, Commissioner-cum-Secretary for Skill Development and Technical Education, Government of Odisha and Rashmi Ranjan Mohapatra, CEO of World Skill Center commended the competitors for their outstanding performance and wished them continued success in the upcoming WorldSkills Competitions. Out of 90 participants representing the state, an impressive 57 competitors emerged victorious—including 15 Gold, 12 Silver, and 14 Bronze medals, along with 16 participants who secured

Medallions for Excellence. The medal winners were accorded a warm welcome upon their arrival at Biju Patnaik International Airport, Bhubaneswar. Officials from the World Skill Center, Bhubaneswar, heaped praises on the efforts of the participants, noting that the accomplishment highlights the dedication, discipline, and technical excellence of Odisha's youth, as well as the strength of the state's skilling ecosystem. Organised by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), IndiaSkills 2025-26 witnessed participation from over 650 candidates across the country, competing in diverse sectors including construction, manufacturing, ICT, creative arts, and services. The competition was conducted across multiple locations, including Greater Noida and key centres in Odisha and other states. The successful candidates from this national championship will represent

## Odisha Takes Leap Towards Sustainable Future with Green Hydrogen Policy and Renewable Energy Roadmap

Bhubaneswar, March 31, 2026 - Odisha has emerged as a pioneer in India's quest for sustainable energy solutions, becoming the first state to announce a Green Hydrogen Policy. This landmark initiative underscores the state's commitment to industrial decarbonization and creating a circular economy, aligning with the broader objectives of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment, Energy Shri Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo with the members of CII and other stakeholders of Renewable Energy. Hon'ble Deputy CM Shri Singh Deo said that the policy is set to drive significant investments in renewable energy (RE), with a focus on green hydrogen production, positioning Odisha as a hub for clean energy innovation. Odisha is focusing more on disaster-resilient infrastructure, distribution sector reforms, and investment in projects like floating solar and Pumped Storage Projects (PSP), integrated with Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). The Confederation of Indian Industry, praised Odisha's progressive leadership in renewable energy. The state's proactive stance is expected to capture carbon opportunities from flue gases, contributing to a cleaner industrial footprint, particularly noting the state's Renewable Energy Policy 2022. The meeting was attended by ACS, Energy, Shri Vishal Kumar Dev, CMD, OPTCL, Shri Bhaskar Jyoti Sharma, senior officers from Energy department, OPTCL, GRIDCO, TPCODL, CII etc.



# Odisha Government Steps Up Measures to Ensure Stable Fuel Supply

## Food Supplies and Urban Development Ministers Hold Key Meeting

Bhubaneswar, April 2, 2026: A high-level review meeting was held today under the joint chairmanship of the Hon'ble Minister of Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare, Shri Krushna Chandra Patra, and the Hon'ble Minister of Housing & Urban Development, Dr. Krushna Chandra Mahapatra, to streamline the supply of LPG and petroleum products across Odisha. The meeting, attended by Principal Secretary, Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare Department, Shri Sanjay Kumar Singh and senior representatives from major oil and gas corporations, focused on accelerating the transition to Piped Natural Gas (PNG) and implementing rigorous digital safeguards to protect consumers. During the meeting, Food Supplies Minister Shri Krushna Chandra Patra issued a stern warning against black-marketing and supply chain irregularities. To ensure transparency, gas agencies have been mandated to enforce



biometric authentication, utilizing both fingerprint and iris scans for all deliveries. The Minister also clarified that once a household receives a PNG connection, their existing LPG connection must be decommissioned to optimize resources. To facilitate this infrastructure shift, District Collectors have been tasked with providing full administrative support to gas companies to ensure the swift

and unhindered laying of pipelines. Urban Development Minister Dr. Krushna Chandra Mahapatra emphasized the necessity of shifting urban centers away from heavy LPG dependency. He urged all government and commercial establishments to adopt PNG connections immediately, ensuring that the Housing & Urban Development Department would provide expedited clearanc-

es for such transitions. Highlighting the cultural significance of the state's events, the Minister specifically directed officials to prioritize PNG infrastructure in Puri to meet the heightened demand expected during the upcoming Rath Yatra festival. To combat the issue of "ghost deliveries" where consumers receive false delivery notifications, Principal Secretary Shri Sanjay Kumar Singh directed agencies to ensure 100% compliance with the Delivery Authentication Code (DAC) system. He reassured that there is no cause for panic regarding gas availability, as the government is monitoring the situation around the clock via a 24-hour control room. Oil company officials confirmed that they are maintaining a consistent five-day buffer stock and are sharing real-time inventory data with the department daily. Moving forward, the state has identified schools, Anganwadis, Ahaar Kendra, and hospitals as priority sectors to receive uninterrupted gas supplies.

## Urban Growth on the Fast Track:

# Housing & Urban Development Department Scales Five-Year High in Development Spending

Bhubaneswar, April 2, 2026: In a significant stride toward accelerating Odisha's urban transformation, the Housing & Urban Development (H&UD) Department has recorded its highest-ever development expenditure in the last five years, reaching ₹8575.61 crore as of March 31, 2026. This marks a steady and encouraging rise from ₹6,996.92 crore in 2022-23, underscoring a sustained commitment to strengthening urban infrastructure and civic services across the state. This notable achievement reflects the cohesive efforts of "Team Urban," under the guidance of Hon'ble Minister H&UD, Dr. Krushna Chandra Mahapatra, whose emphasis on outcome-oriented governance and citizen-centric urban services has set the

strategic direction for the Department. The steady administrative leadership of Smt Usha Padhee, Additional Chief Secretary H&UD, has ensured rigorous monitoring, timely execution, and effective translation of these priorities into tangible outcomes on the ground. The Department has demonstrated marked improvement in financial efficiency, achieving an overall utilization rate of 86.50%, a significant increase from 73.47% in the previous fiscal year. This reflects a clear shift toward ensuring that budgetary allocations are effectively translated into tangible outcomes on the ground. A key driver of this performance has been the remarkable progress under State Sector Schemes. Expenditure under these schemes has risen sharp-

ly from ₹2,676.15 crore in 2022-23 to ₹4,285.45 crore in the current fiscal, with an impressive utilization rate of 98.18%, compared to 82.92% last year. This surge highlights the growing strength of the Department's internal project execution mechanisms, further reinforced by continuous review and hands-on guidance at the highest administrative level. The Department has also sustained exemplary performance in devolving funds to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). State Finance Commission transfers have achieved near-total utilization of 99.70% for the fourth consecutive year, amounting to ₹1,489.51 crore. In Centrally Sponsored Schemes, the Department has demonstrated a strong recovery, with expenditure rising to ₹1144 crore from ₹595.95 crore

in the previous year. This turnaround signals renewed momentum in leveraging central partnerships to advance Odisha's urban development agenda. Looking ahead, the H&UD Department is poised for an even more ambitious phase, with a Budget Estimate of ₹10,726.87 crore for 2026-27—the highest in the past five years. This forward-looking allocation reflects a clear vision to not only sustain but significantly expand urban infrastructure and service delivery across the state. With a balanced approach that integrates efficient financial management with high-impact developmental spending, and under the steadfast leadership of Smt. Usha Padhee, the Department continues to chart a resilient and future-ready pathway for urban growth—firmly aligned with the vision of a Viksit Odisha.

## Chief Secretary Ms Garg launched SĀDHA Saptah – 2026

# This is a National Learning Week Programme dedicated to Capacity Building & Governance Excellence

Bhubaneswar|2nd April 2026: SĀDHANA Saptah – 2026, a Nationwide capacity-building initiative aligned with the vision of Mission Karmayogi, was formally launched by Smt. Anu Garg, IAS, Chief Secretary, Odisha at Lok Seva Bhawan, today. The initiative, being implemented from 2nd to 8th April 2026, is being organised by the Gopabandhu Academy of Administration on behalf of General Administration & Public Grievance Department, Government of Odisha. It is capsuled as SĀDHANA Saptah, 2026 ‘Sadhana to become a Karmayogi – building performance-linked competencies through iGOT Digital Platform’. SĀDHANA Saptah is part of a national effort led by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) through Capacity Building Commission (CBC) and Karmayogi Bharat (KB) to promote continuous learning and build future-ready, citizen-centric governance capacities across States and Departments. At the core of the initiative is the iGOT Karmayogi Platform, which enables government officials to undertake structured, self-paced digital learning. iGOT



also has courses available in Odia. During the week, all officials have been encouraged to complete a minimum of four hours of learning on the iGOT platform. Special focus areas include: Completion of at least one Artificial Intelligence (AI) Daksh courses, with recognition through ‘AI Daksh’ badges Completion of at least one Marketplace Course leading to ‘Karmayogi Utkarsh’ certification Engagement in Samuhik Charcha (group discussions/webinars) on governance themes Capacity-building activities by training institutions through blended learning approaches

In her address, the Chief Secretary emphasised the importance of leveraging iGOT digital platform to foster a culture of continuous learning, innovation, and performance-linked competency development in governance. The launch event was also attended by the Shri Deoranjana Kumar Singh, IAS, Development Commissioner & ACS, Odisha and Smt. Chithra Arumugam, IAS, Director General of the Gopabandhu Academy of Administration (GAA), along with senior officials from GA & PG Dept., P&C dept and GAA. The State aims to significantly enhance active participation on the iGOT platform during the week, with targets including higher course completion rates, and improved engagement across departments. Departments and training institutions have been encouraged to actively participate and share their achievements on social media using the hashtags #OdishaSADHANASaptah2026. SĀDHANA Saptah – 2026 reaffirms Odisha’s commitment to building a skilled, digitally empowered, and citizen-focused administrative ecosystem.

## DCM Pravati Parida virtually Inaugurates 1,889 AWCs Across 30 Districts

Bhubaneswar,02/04/2026: In a significant step towards strengthening grassroots childcare infrastructure, 1,889 newly constructed Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) across 30 districts of Odisha were inaugurated virtually by the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister to Women & Child Development, Mission Shakti and Tourism Mrs Pravati Parida in presence of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Minister Rabi Narayan Naik at WCD Conference hall, today. Addressing the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister reiterated the government’s vision for quality and inclusive infrastructure, stating, “Sundar, Sakhyam, Sudrudha Anganwadi is our aim.” She further interacted with district administrations of Balasore, Ganjam, Cuttack, Angul, Deogarh and other districts during the programme, and reviewed the progress of Anganwadi Centre buildings to ensure timely completion and effective implementation.



Highlighting the accelerated pace of development in the state, Minister Rabi Narayan Naik lauded the WCD Department for its efforts under the able guidance of Deputy Chief Minister Mrs. Pravati Parida. He emphasized that the children currently enrolled in Anganwadi centres will play a pivotal role in shaping and building a developed Odisha by 2036. Officials noted that the initiative has been made possible through strong convergence between the Women & Child Development Department and the Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Department. The Commissioner-cum-Secretary, WCD Dr. Mrinalini Darswal was present along with other officers of both the departments in the inauguration programme.

## “Ama Poshak Ama Parichaya” Day Celebrated Across Odisha with Handloom Pride

Bhubaneswar 2nd April, 2026: People across Odisha enthusiastically celebrated “Ama Poshak Ama Parichaya” (Our Attire, Our Identity) Day by donning traditional handloom attire as part of the ongoing Odia Pakhya celebrations, being observed from 1st to 14th April under the aegis of the Odia Language, Literature and Culture Department. On the second day of the festivities, citizens from rural areas to the capital city of Bhubaneswar participated in large numbers, showcasing their cultural pride by wearing traditional garments. Handloom, regarded as a symbol of Odisha’s rich heritage and cultural diversity, was at the heart of the celebrations. At Lok Seva Bhawan and various government offices, officials and staff members turned up in traditional attire, promoting the spirit of the campaign.



Across districts, discussion sessions were organised on the theme “Handloom and Weaving Industry of Odisha,” highlighting the significance of the state’s weaving traditions. Exhibitions featuring handicrafts and Pattachitra art were also held to create awareness among the younger generation about Odisha’s vibrant handloom, handicrafts and traditional art forms. Intricate displays using Jhota, Chita and Muruja further added to the visual appeal of the celebrations.

