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Bhawanipatna station struggles to be on 'AIR' due to staff shortage

BHAWANIPATNA :Acute shortage of staff has affected the functioning of All India Radio, Bhawanipatna. Set up in 1993, the station was not just popular in its primary zone of Kalahandi and Nuapada districts, but also in Balangir, Sonepur, Phulbani, Bargarh, Nabarangpur and Rayagada besides Raigarh district of neighbouring Chhattisgarh. However, dearth of programme and technical staff has hit the radio station hard.

The radio station remains without a Station Director with an Assistant Station Director managing the show while being in charge of Berhampur All India Radio centre as well. All the sanctioned posts of five Programme Executives and three posts of Transmission Executives are vacant and are being managed by casual employees.

On the technical front, posts of Superintending Engineer, two Assistant Directors (engineering) and four Assistant Engineers have been lying vacant since long. The lone Assistant Director (engineering) is managing all technical aspects of AIR, Bhawanipatna.

The vacancies apart, frequent stealing of copper equipment from the transmission centre of AIR at Belamal, 12 km from here, has hit transmission of medium (2 X 100 KW) waves. Transmission from the centre has been stopped and to manage the show, FM service is being used.

Assistant Director (engineering) of All India Radio, Himanshu Sekhar Naik said on July 22, copper coils and capacitors from the antenna tuning unit of Belamal were stolen by miscreants. The transmission staff borrowed the equipment from AIR centres in Cuttack and Sambalpur to keep the transmission on. On August 30 night again, the copper plates from transmission centre were stolen. Naik said a case has been registered with Bhawanipatna Sadar police, but there has been no breakthrough yet.