Nothing ventured, nothing gained. These ageless words of wisdom have stood between many bright people and their dreams, but not Bijayananda Patnaik. Biju babu was nothing but the very epitome of fearless ventures into the unknown, be it an adventure, an industrial enterprise, or politics at the highest level.

Even as an adolescent, Biju babu was drawn to adventure and perseverance. Testimony to this is his legendary bicycle trip as a teenager from Cuttack to Peshawar. The die was cast and his became a life of adventure. His exploits as a war pilot, freedom fighter and rescuer of Sukamo are too well known to bear repetition.

Ironically, what is not often given the importance it deserves is his pioneering success as a major industrialist of free India. Biju babu was not only modern Orissa’s first industrialist - Madhu babu having lived in a previous century when Orissa was not yet a separate political identity - but also at the very top of the mid-twentieth century pantheon of India’s industrial Tsars. I am often shocked at how little many of our younger Oriya citizens know about this phase of his life. In fact, I take joy in pointing out that Biju babu’s industrial empire, the Kalinga Group, ranked right up there with the Birlas and Tatas, not to mention the Dalmias, Mafatlals, Wadias, Nandas, and the like.

The Kalinga Group spanned business ventures across many sectors, aviation, steel, refrigeration and many others. The list just goes on and on and on. He could have chosen to operate anywhere in India, or the world for that matter - indeed, he had palatial homes in Kolkata and Delhi and was equally at home in the top echelons of business in Europe and other parts of the world - but he chose to install all his industrial ventures in his beloved Orissa. It was not just the thousands of jobs he created in the process that motivated him to do so; at the very heart of his dreams and ambitions was a core mission to bring about a renaissance of the State’s ancient glory.

What is astounding is not just that his industrial empire straddled such heights of twentieth century India’s industrial firmament, but that his vision went much further into the future. For example, he was one of the earliest advocates of research to bring about commercial feasibility of coal gasification, a technology which is only now being taken seriously and being given priority by the Centre. Biju babu saw far ahead of

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anybody else that, given Orissa's large reserves of coal which are hampered by high ash and sulphur content - something which creates obstructions in both energy efficiency as well as environmental safety-coal gasification technology would be as much as of a boon to Orissa as the discovery of oil was for many Middle Eastern nations.

His stupendous success as an industrialist was not an end for Biju babu, but rather a means, a vehicle for higher objectives. One such was the Kalinga International Award given by UNESCO and funded by Biju babu's industrial enterprises. Besides the many eminent international personalities who have received this award, we must not forget the thousands of brilliant Oriya boys and girls who were given scholarships and other assistance to pursue higher studies in India and abroad. At the core of this was Biju babu's desire to instill confidence in modern Oriyas to come out from two millennia of diffidence.

The word "intrepid" was invented for such a man. While everyone laments the passing of Biju babu the legend, we should never forget Biju babu, the entrepreneur.

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JANANI EXPRESS: 24 HOURS TRANSPORTATION FACILITY FOR INSTITUTIONAL DELIVERY

National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Health & Family Welfare Department, Orissa with a view to promoting institutional deliveries and making available round the clock free of cost transportation facility, has initiated a new move under the name of Janani Express. Presently, the scheme is to be implemented in 124 Blocks having a Delivery Load of more than 50 deliveries per month. Eligible beneficiaries of the programme are pregnant women and sick infants who are in badly need of Transport Services. The Janani Express aims at providing benefit of transportation to all of the expectant mothers for their institutional deliveries. It would benefit these women also to deal with any emergency circumstances during the pre and post-delivery period. Besides, the eligible beneficiaries of the IMR Mission like sick infants would also be benefited by the transportation facility for their casual medical treatment under the scheme. The vehicles to be used for transportation of these people would be available at the government hospitals, community health centres, primary health centres or any other suitable place in the respective areas.

The vehicles would be well equipped with all necessary facilities for carrying the expectant mothers to the health institutions. Drivers of these vehicles to be operated on contract basis would have mobile phones so that they would be able to furnish the information about the health status of the patients to the hospital in view of ensuring better health facilities to them. On the front and back of the vehicles, 'Janani Express' would be mentioned with clarity. Besides, the telephone numbers to contact the vehicle would also be written inside and outside the vans. The area where there is no mobile phone facility, the fixed landline telephone number of the hospital would be mentioned on the vehicles. This initiative would certainly help reducing both Infant and Maternal deaths in Orissa.