



HAPPY REUNION: Dhanbad resident Manju Devi, mother of 12-year-old special child Rajendra, receives a cheque from Jagatsinghpur district collector Yamini Sadangi for their trip home from Odisha on Wednesday. Telegraph picture

Lost, found by Aadhaar

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Paradip: A 12-year-old mentally challenged boy, lost in this port town of Odisha, has been reunited with his family in Dhanbad, Jharkhand, with the help of his Aadhaar biometric details, a heart-warming achievement for the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) that is currently drawing flak for alleged data leak, among other things.

The minor was spotted on NH-5A, on the outskirts of Paradip township, a few weeks ago. The Jagatsinghpur administration handed him over to the district child welfare committee, which sent him to a state-run shelter in the town, said Paradip *thana* inspector Chinmoy Rout.

Child protection officer

Udayanath Swain said the boy spoke very incoherently and they soon realised he was differently abled. "We could not understand what he was saying through words of gestures. So, in accordance with provisions under the Juvenile Justice Act, we advertised a missing report in newspapers," Swain recalled.

But, the well-meaning exercise proved futile.

"As a last resort, we knocked on the door of the UIDAI's district unit. We got lucky and he was reunited with his parents yesterday (Wednesday)," said the child protection officer.

The rescued boy's fingerprints matched with one in the elaborate Aadhaar database. The authorities found out that his name was Rajendra Ku-

mar and his parents, Suresh Kumar and Manju Devi, hailed from Haldipati village in Dhansar *thana* area of Dhanbad district.

"We established communication with the family, again using Aadhaar details. We learnt that the couple had come to Paradip in search of a job last year and that is when they lost their son. A missing report had been lodged with Paradip police," Swain said.

Rajendra was handed over to his parents in the presence of officials from the district child welfare committee on Wednesday. District collector Yamini Sadangi, taking note of the poor economic status of the couple, also sanctioned Rs 10,000 from Red Cross funds for their return journey to Jharkhand, Swain added.