

Odia girl Maithili's take on data-mining earns PM praise

DIANA SAHU @ Bhubaneswar

CUTTACK girl Maithili Jena who represented Odisha in the National Youth Parliament Festival-2021 on Tuesday, was lauded by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for speaking on the crucial issue of data-mining and digital security.

Maithili, a 19-year-old student of Salipur Autonomous College under Cuttack district, highlighted the problem of unregulated data-mining which is

causing privacy issues and imbalance of power caused by information being in the hands of a few rather than many.

"Data is the new oil. However, treating data like oil - hoarding and storing it - will have little benefit. Data like oil is a source of power. And those who control it are establishing themselves as masters of the universe. Data-mining giants

have a responsibility to ensure that data is used for the benefit of humanity as a whole, rather than simply being allowed to enrich themselves", she said at the valedictory function of the National Youth Parliament Festival that was held at the central hall of the Parliament.



Stating that data privacy, open and equitable access to the

internet is like clean air or safe drinking water, she said it has become a central pillar of socio-economic and political dynamics of the society.

"India is the second largest country in terms of internet usage but Indians do not give importance to data privacy. Hence, I wanted to convey the message to public and government that unregulated data mining is a real threat today", said Maithili, who is pursuing English Honours from the Salipur

college.

Earlier, Maithili had won the first prize at the State-level Youth Parliament Festival held on January 4 where she spoke on "Building a Startup Ecosystem in India".

She was among the 29 national winners who got an opportunity to speak before the national jury comprising of Roopa Ganguly, MP, Rajya Sabha, Parvesh Sahib Singh, MP Lok Sabha and journalist Prafulla Ketkar.