

Maoist bandh brings Midnapore to a halt

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Kolkata Despite a mixed response in Bankura and Purulia, the 48-hour bandh called by the CPI(Maoist) paralysed life in Jhargram sub-division and Midnapore town in West Midnapore district on Monday. The outfit had called for a 48-hour bandh in five states, including West Bengal, in protest against the arrest of a leader in Jharkhand, who was not produced in court in due time.

The People's Committee Against Police Atrocities (PCPA) is also observing a bandh since August 18 in the three districts of West Midnapore, Bankura and Purulia demanding the withdrawal of the joint forces from Lalgarh.

The two bandhs paralysed life in Midnapore town and Jhargram sub-division in West Midnapore, Khatra sub-division in Bankura and rural areas in Purulia. West Midnapore DM, N S Nigam, said government establishments, schools, colleges and banks remained closed and public transport has also been hit since August 18.

Bankura DM Golam Ali Ansari said normal life was affected in Khatra sub-division following the bandh. There were no buses on roads but few schools were open in Khatra, said Ansari.

The bandh saw a mixed response in Purulia, as shops and government offices remained open in Purulia town but normal life was affected due to lack of transport services, said a district official in Purulia.

The Bankura police, meanwhile, are likely to carry out an operation in Sarenga from Tuesday against the Maoists, who have established a strong base in Khayerpahari, Majuaria, Makarkol, Bhejgara villages under the Sargenga police station area. Though Bankura SP Vishal Garg refused to divulge details of the proposed police action, it is learnt that three companies of Central paramilitary forces are stationed in Sarenga.

After the joint operation in Lalgarh, Bankura police had also carried out operation in the forest areas of Sarenga and arrested locals for their alleged involvement with Maoist outfits.

In a separate incident, the police conducted search operation in Midnapore town Sunday night after receiving information that Maoists were likely to strike in the area. A source in West Mindapore police said they did not want to take chances because Maoists have continued their attacks in various places in the district.

Tension, meanwhile, prevailed in Belpahari, West Midnapore, after two members of Jharkhand Party (Aditya) were killed on Sunday. Chunibala Hansda, local MLA of Jharkhand Party (Naren), said the Maoists killed the two persons as they had joined a platform formed by the CPM to resist the Maoists.