

# The Statesman

## Life in Midnapore Paralysed

Statesman News Service

MIDNAPORE, Nov. 16 [2008]: The eleven-day agitation spearheaded by locals under the banner of the Sara Bharat Jakat Majhi Madowa Juran Gaonta, a Santhal organisation, has disrupted normal life completely in Lalgarh, Binpur, Jhargram, Jamboni and Belpahari blocks of Midnapore West.

Locals have been protesting against police atrocities in the villages of Lalgarh. The agitation spread to Goaltore, Garbeta, Salboni, Gopiballavpur and Nayagram blocks with the Jharkhand Disam Party calling a 12-hour bandh in the district today.

Buses between Midnapore town and to the troubled areas were off roads and shops and market remained closed. However, the bandh impact in Midnapore town, Kharagpur and adjoining areas was damp. Traffic on NH-6 was disrupted as the Kurmi Chhatra Yuva Sangram Committee blocked the highway at Lodhasuli point in Jhargram for about an hour from 2 p.m.

Meanwhile, Jhargram is still inaccessible as the Lodhasuli-Jhargram Road has been blocked with tree trunks dumped at Kalaboni and Belpahari-Jhargram Road. The tree trunks will not be removed from different points on the road till a settlement is reached between the administration and the agitators, protesters said. The all-important meeting in this regard between the Police Santras Birodhi Public Committee and the district administration is scheduled for Monday at Dalilpur in Lalgarh. Power services were restored in Lalgarh today, 10 days after it was disconnected by the agitators.

Police personnel deployed at Burijhore, Kankrajhore, Jamtalgar, Nekrachara, Tarafeni Barrage, Chhurimara, Niguria, and Banspahari remained in their camps apprehending a Maoist attack. A major section of the Majhi-Madowa santhals, particularly the older ones, are in favour of the lifting the agitation immediately as the community have been going without food and work for last few days. This is the prime season for them to earn with the harvesting of paddy going on. If the agitation continues, according to the wishes of the younger members of Majhi-Madowa santhals, their economic conditions will deteriorate further. The older generation is also miffed about some people trying to give a communal colour to their movement by calling it a "Second Santhal Rebellion". The dubious intention behind this campaign is to give it a political colour to cash in Adivasi vote bank, they said.

Mrs Chuni Bala Hansda, the Jharkhnad Party MLA, who also belongs to the Santhal community is also against this motivated communal campaign "as it would make a division between the tribals and non-tribals."

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