

The Times of India

Lalgarh tribal leader Chatrodhar Mahato arrested

PTI 26 September 2009, 04:50pm IST

KOLKATA: Elusive tribal leader Chhatradhar Mahato, spearheading an agitation since November last year against alleged police atrocities at Lalgarh in West Midnapore district, was arrested on Saturday

Mahato, the leader of People's Committee Against Police Atrocities (PCAPA), was arrested from Pirka near Lalgarh when he was preparing to give an interview to a journalist, who was trailed by the police, a top police official said.

The tribal leader, who had been giving regular interviews to local television news channels when the anti-Maoist operations by central para-military forces and the state police at Lalgarh began on June 19, had gone underground shortly afterwards.

The tribals under him had "liberated" Lalgarh and had free run for nine months with the police withdrawing from camps before the central forces and the local police recaptured the areas from the grip of Maoists, who were assisting the tribal agitation.

The agitation started after police raided the homes of tribals shortly after West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and then union ministers Ram Vilas Paswan and Jitin Prasada narrowly escaped a landmine blast at Salboni on November two.

The tribals under Mahato had demanded that the then Superintendent of Police Rajesh Singh should appear before them and apologise for the "atrocities" committed by the police.

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