

## Doctor arrested in Lalgarh



Midnapore, Sept. 18 [2009]: Jatin Pratihar, a homoeopath whom the police had been looking for since the completion of their circle of domination in Lalgarh, was arrested today.

The police have been tightlipped about how they arrested Pratihar. An officer only said Pratihar was nabbed in his hideout in Lalgarh early this morning.

Pratihari, 52, was the first person the security forces started looking for when they marched to Kantapahari on June 29 having completed the circle of domination.

The man who the police believe collected funds for Maoists and also sheltered rebels in his Kantapahari home, was last seen giving drinking water to some jawans [soldiers] near his two-storey house.

Hours later, when a search party reached his home, Pratihar had disappeared. The police raided his chamber, about 30m from his house and detained his helper Prasanta Mondal.

"The arrest of the homoeopath is important. I will not go into the details for the sake of our operation. What I can say is that he was not just a Maoist sympathiser but an active functionary," said Manoj Verma, West Midnapore superintendent of police.

"We also have information that before the security forces moved into Lalgarh, Maoist leaders Kishanji and Bikash had taken shelter in Pratihar's Kantapahari home," said a police officer.

Police sources said Pratihar had been treating injured and sick Maoists in various places, including Bansber and Tasabandh, (about 7-8km from Lalgarh).

"He helped collect money (for the Maoists) from local traders and school teachers in Lalgarh and its neighbouring areas," another officer said.

The police believe Pratihar also drew up plans for armed attacks on CPM activists.

In a separate incident last night, a group of villagers caught two Maoists and beat one of them to death when the duo came searching for CPM workers.

Police said Swadesh Hembram and Subhas Hembram, both in their early thirties, were assaulted with iron rods and bamboo sticks. Women too attacked them with bontis (the curved instrument used to cut fish and vegetables).

Both were admitted to Midnapore Medical College and Hospital where Swadesh died around 2am today.

On September 7, Ranjit Singh Sardar, a Maoist, was dragged out of his home in Belpahari by a group of villagers and shot dead.

Rebel arms supplier

A man suspected to be an arms supplier to Maoists was also arrested in Lalgarh today. The police found a rifle in Aswini Bej's house in Belatikri. "Aswini used supply arms to Maoists," SP Manoj Verma said.

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