

Joint forces leave behind condoms, booze bottles in school

Sukumar Mahato, TNN 4 December 2009, 02:24am IST

GOHMIDANGA (West Midnapore): After months of local opposition, several failed promises, and finally, a court order, the joint forces moved out of Gohmidanga High School in Lalgarh on Thursday, but left behind a heap of empty liquor bottles, used condoms and broken furniture.

As a result, the school will reopen only on December 7, after the compound is thoroughly cleaned. Classes have remained suspended since July 1, when the forces moved in by breaking the locks.

The Calcutta high court had ordered a week ago that schools occupied by joint forces had to be vacated by December 30. The order came after several promises — one by the home secretary in August and another by the chief minister — to hand back occupied schools to the authorities failed to materialise.

But when the Gohmidanga school was finally vacated on Thursday, teachers and administrative staff were in for a shock. The classroom floors were littered with empty bottles of liquor and used condoms. Blackboards were defaced, benches and chairs were broken and electricity boards damaged.

“Police came to my residence at Dahijuri and informed that the joint forces would leave the school. But we were shocked to see the school premises so dirty. How could the jawans [soldiers] damage school property like this? It will take us two to three days to clean up the mess. So we’ve decided to start classes from Monday,” said Nimai Chandra Patra, teacher-in-charge of the school.

“What’s worrying us is the electricity bill. Over the past five months that the joint forces were here, the bill touched Rs 12,896 in two phases. Though the police have promised to pay the bill, we fear the WBSEB will cut power supply due to the high dues,” said assistant teacher Utpal Pal.

PCPA spokesperson Asit Mahato said: “The joint forces moved out after the students, guardians and teachers started a movement against the school’s occupation. Despite the court order, forces are still occupying 10 schools in the district.” Local resentment against the occupation of the school had touched such heights that students and guardians had got together to demonstrate in front of the school gates on July 20 and 25. Police lathicharged the mob, allegedly leaving several injured. Villagers later arranged for temporary classes under makeshift tents.

There were about 250 jawans of CRPF, BSF, SAP as well as women police personnel at the

school. On Thursday, they walked to the Chandra police camp 14 km away after loading their goods on lorries.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Joint-forces-leave-behind-condoms-booze-bottles-in-school/articleshow/5298221.cms>