

Mahato seeks status of 'political' prisoner

January 9, 2010

Kolkata A petition was filed today at the court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (ACJM) Jhargram seeking release of Chattradhar Mahato, leader of PCAPA of Lalgarh who was produced in the court today.

Kaushik Sinha, counsel for Mahato, moved another petition in which he sought the status of political prisoner for Mahato who was arrested on September 26 last year on several charges, including murder and sedition. MD. Rezza, the ACJM, fixed January 18 for the next hearing.

The CID had filed charge-sheet against Mahato and six others under the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) in connection with a criminal case (No-161, Lalgarh PS), which came up for hearing today.

Sinha said the charges brought against Mahato in the charge-sheet were not justified and pleaded his client should be treated as political prisoner since he organised movements by local people to press for various demands and that he was not involved with terrorist outfits.

The CID's charge-sheet names five persons involved with the PACPA of Lalgarh and two intellectuals — Raja Sarkhel and Prasun Chatterjee. Sarkhel and Chatterjee were arrested from Kolkata in the first week of October. All of them were booked under the UAPA.

According to Sinha, police implicated Mahato in 21 criminal cases of which bail was granted in 17. Mahato was discharged in one criminal case.

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