

# Maoist Bandh Hits Banking

The Times of India

Aug. 28, 2009

MIDNAPORE: The banking system has virtually collapsed in parts of West Midnapore because of the indefinite bandh called by Maoist-backed People's Committee against Police Atrocities (PCPA). The strike entered its ninth day on Thursday and has seen a spate of killings.

Authorities of nationalized, private and cooperative [banks](#), have been forced to close 84 branches in areas under Maoist influence. The Jhargram subdivision is the worst affected.

State Bank of India has shut 17 branches, while UBI could not open 14 branches for the past nine days. ATMs in Jhargram have run dry.

With the cash flow crippled, businesses are suffering. Traders can't access their [accounts](#) and have run out of ready cash. Banks are facing similar problems in the neighbouring Bankura and Purulia districts as well.

On Thursday, the impasse was discussed at a meeting between DM Narayan Swaroop Nigam and representatives of different banks.

"A total of 84 branches have been closed for nine days," Nigam said after the meeting. "Bank representatives voiced their concern. Panchayat samitis are unable to pay their workers and development programmes have been suspended. The Jhargram SDO tried to find a way out of the impasse at an all-party meeting, but it proved fruitless."

"Transporting cash is a big problem here. We depend on private vehicles to carry [currency](#), but nobody dares to hire out cars in the Maoist-dominated areas. We tried to open some branches, but had to shut them after threats," UBI chief regional manager T K Sinha said.

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