

The Statesman

[Nov. 10, 2008]

Lalgarh on the boil over arrests

MIDNAPORE, Nov. 10: The ongoing agitation by the indigenous people in Lalgarh in Midnapore West gained momentum today after local people blocked roads by laying tree trunks on them. This happened after the all party meeting convened by the district magistrate failed to yield any result yesterday. The meeting failed to produce any result after the CPI-M leaders held the Trinamul, Jharkhand Party and Congress responsible for the situation. The supporters of these parties are creating trouble in the area posing as Maoists at night, the CPI-M leaders had said. Thousands of indigenous people including women and children took to streets today in the morning, beating drums and carrying their traditional weapons such as bows, arrows and tangis. They dug up roads and used tree trunks to clog traffic movement on the roads.

At Dohijuri near Jhargram town, the agitators chased police away when they tried to stop them from digging up NH-9. Because of this Jhargram had been cut off from Bankura and Purulia district through Binpur since 6 a.m. The situation in Lalgarh was even worse with two more roads ~ one connecting Goaltore and the other connecting Midnapore and Jhargram town ~ were cut off today as a result of which patients had a tough time since they could neither be taken to Jhargram nor Midnapore Medical College and Hospital. Lalgarh remained shrouded in darkness for the fifth successive day today as the WBSEB staff were scared to restore electricity connections.

The agitators were firm with their demands which include unconditional release of seven people including three school children arrested on charges of having Maoist link and their involvement in landmine blast that occurred on 2 November and punishment of the policemen for torturing local people including women. Meanwhile, denying police excesses, DG, Mr AB Vohra said: "Police acted with restraint and in a disciplined manner. If there are any specific complaints we are ready to conduct an inquiry and take action." The agitators have threatened to cut off Jhargram Belpahari road via Parihati tomorrow. SNS

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