

Mamata demonstrates for more security in Nandigram

Protesting the ongoing violence in Nandigram, allegedly by cadres of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee has staged a demonstration inside the office of East Midnapore Police Superintendent S.S. Panda.

Banerjee ended her eight-hour protest at around 2 a.m. Friday after Panda assured her that he would take steps to bring the law and order situation under control.

'I am withdrawing the protest as the police superintendent and other officials have assured us that they would restore peace in Nandigram. They also promised to provide security to the villagers who were driven out of their homes by cadres of the CPI-M,' Banerjee told reporters.

'We know the violence will not be stopped as the officer-in-charge of Nandigram police station, Debashis Chakraborty, is supporting CPI-M hooligans,' she added.

Nandigram witnessed violent incidents last year during protests by villagers against the government's plans to take over 10,000 acres of land for a special economic zone (SEZ) in the district.

The panchayat elections will be held here Sunday and political rivalry has led to renewal of violence in the region.

Banerjee, accompanied by her party MLA Sisir Adhikari, also demanded central paramilitary force deployment in Nandigram during the panchayat poll.

Members of anti-land acquisition group Bhumi Uchched Pratirodh Committee (BUPC), supported by the Trinamool Congress, have alleged that CPI-M cadres have been entering Nandigram from nearby Khejuri and Bahargunj areas, considered CPI-M strongholds, and beating up villagers in Nandigram.

Banerjee demanded that the Khejuri border be sealed immediately.

'Many villagers were critically injured in the attack by the CPI-M cadres and are now admitted in Nandigram block hospital. Over 1,000 villagers were driven out of their homes and took shelter at a temporary relief camp near the office of the Nandigram Block Development Officer (BDO),' said Mir Musharaf Ali of Satengabari, who was allegedly dragged out of his house by CPI-M activists and took shelter at the camp.

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