

Thousands of Congress workers arrested in Orissa

Thousands of Congress workers courted arrest across Orissa Monday as part of their agitation protesting the state government's 'failure' on all fronts.

They carried out marches, shouting slogans and carrying placards, in several cities including capital Bhubaneswar demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

Thousands of Congress workers demonstrated in front of government offices and tried to disrupt official works in several places and offered to court arrest, police said.

'The stir has been entirely peaceful. No untoward incidents have been reported from any part of the state,' the state's Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) Pradeep Kapoor told IANS.

State Congress president Jayadev Jena said: 'The law and order situation in the state has been deteriorating and criminals are having a field day.'

'Patnaik holds the home portfolio but is incapable of controlling the lawlessness. He has no moral ground to remain in power and should resign.'

He cited riots in Kandhamal, the murder of judo coach Biranchi Das and a woman official's allegation of sexual harassment by former speaker Maheswar Mohanty.

This shows that Patnaik has lost control over his administration and police, Jena said.

At least 150,000 Congress activists across the state participated in the agitation and more than 50,000 of them offered to court arrest, said Jena who was arrested here along with former chief minister J.B. Patnaik and several other prominent leaders.

About 10,000 Congress workers were arrested in Jajpur district. They included former central minister Srikanta Jena and MP R.C. Khuntia.

(© IANS / India eNews)