

Food, raw materials pile up on roads as Gujjars continue blockade

Trucks laden with food are stranded and factories here are not getting essential raw materials as Gujjars in adjoining Rajasthan blockade roads for the sixth day running to press their demand for Scheduled Tribe status.

On Wednesday, hundreds of truck loaded with potatoes were held up along the highways and outside cold storages.

'The fear is that the potatoes will go bad in this hot weather,' said Guman Singh, a driver whose potato-laden truck is stranded near Fatehpur Sikri, a short drive from Agra.

Trucks loaded with marble for markets here are held up at Kishangarh in Rajasthan, causing the suppliers huge losses, say marble dealers.

Industry sources say glass factories in Firozabad and iron foundries in Agra are running short of raw materials. On Tuesday, Gujjars blocked the road between Firozabad and Fatehabad.

The tourism industry has also been hit since the Gujjars have blocked the Jaipur-Agra highway.

Railway officials said more than 90 metres of railway track between Mathura and Alwar was damaged by the protesters Tuesday. Many trains have been cancelled.

The area bordering Rajasthan is tense as it has a sizeable Gujjar population and members of the community in Uttar Pradesh are expressing solidarity with the protesters in Rajasthan.

The Gujjars are demanding Scheduled Tribe status for better education and job opportunities.

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