

Mixed response to Maoist strike in Bihar

A strike called by Maoists in Bihar evoked a mixed response Wednesday even as they blew up railway tracks in three areas, including Railway Minister Lalu Prasad's home constituency in Chapra.

Urban areas were largely unaffected while normal life was hit in some rural areas. No major violence was reported across the state during the state-wide 24-hour strike that started late Tuesday night, a police official said.

Maoists began their strike by blowing up railway tracks in between Mahaul-Mahesi railway stations on Narkatiyaganj-Muzaffarpur railway section in West Champaran district, about 200 km from here.

A few hours later Wednesday, Maoist guerrillas blew up a railway track in Railway Minister Lalu Prasad's parliamentary constituency in Chapra to enforce their strike, the police said.

Railway sources said the rebels blew up a railway track between Badagopal-Avtarnagar railway stations in Saran district on the Chapra-Sonepur section of the East Central Railway, about 100 km from here.

Train traffic was disrupted as Maoist guerrillas blew up railway tracks and repair work will be delayed due to heavy rains since Tuesday, a railway official said.

Official sources in the home department said that the Maoist strike call evoked no response in urban areas including Patna, Gaya, Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur and Purnea. A red alert has been sounded.

Normal life in some rural areas, regarded as Maoist strongholds, in Aurangabad, Arwal and Gaya districts were affected.

The Maoists had given the strike call in Bihar and Jharkhand to protest police operation against them.

In view of strike, the Railways has cancelled some of the trains July 2 and routes of several trains were changed.

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