Irate tribals set CPI-M office ablaze in West Bengal

Hundreds of agitated tribals Monday set ablaze a Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) office in West Bengal's Maoist-hit Lalgarh region to protest alleged police excesses after the Nov 2 landmine blast in Salboni targetted at Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's convoy.

A large number of people, mostly supporters of the tribal-led Police Santras Birodhi Committee (anti-police atrocity committee), ransacked the CPI-M party office at Belatikri at Lalgarh and then set it on fire, West Midnapore police superintendent R.K. Singh told IANS.

He said: 'We've already sent our police force to verify the information. But there are no reports of any injury.'

Trouble erupted at Lalgarh after the district police arrested some school students and allegedly heckled tribal women following the landmine blast that ambushed the convoy of Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and central ministers Ram Vilas Paswan and Jitin Prasad near Bhadutala Nov 2.

The tribals dug up metalled roads and placed big tree trunks across them, virtually cutting off the trouble-prone zone from the rest of the district. They also demanded a public apology from the district police for the alleged excesses committed against them during the course of investigations into the landmine blast.

In a separate incident, hundreds of Congress supporters also staged a blockade on National Highway-6, causing a major traffic bottleneck. They demanded immediate administrative action into the ongoing tribal unrest at Lalgarh.

Meanwhile in Bankura district, CPI-M activists, armed with improvised weapons, fought a pitched battle with Jharkhand Disham Party (JDP) supporters over the alleged police action on tribal communities at Lalgarh.

According to media reports, two supporters of JDP were injured in the skirmish at Taldangra area of Bankura.

However, West Bengal Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) Raj Kanojia did not confirm any incident of fresh violence in the region.

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