

## Shutdown called by Congress hits life in West Bengal

A 12-hour shutdown called by the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee crippled life across the state as hundreds of Congress supporters blockaded roads and staged demonstrations Friday.

'The shutdown has been peaceful so far. We've not received any report of untoward incidents in any part of the state,' Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) Raj Kanojia told IANS.

Sources said a bus was damaged by Congress activists Friday morning at Baguihati near Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport. Later, Rapid Action Force personnel were deployed at the spot to bring the situation under control.

'As of now, we've not received any such report. Maybe we will get it in the next few hours,' Kanojia said.

Train services were also disrupted due to the shutdown. Many long-distance and local trains were halted midway following protests by Congress supporters.

A number of short-distance trains like Biswabharati Fast Passenger, Asansol-Haldia Express, Howrah-Purulia Express and Steel Express were stopped at different railway stations due to blockade of tracks.

The state Congress leadership said the 12-hour shutdown had been called in 12 of the 19 districts of West Bengal.

The party claimed that one of its supporters had died and five others were injured in clashes with the police during a 12-hour shutdown Thursday in the violence-affected Mongolkote block in Burdwan district.

However, police and family members of the victim said the Congress supporter died of cardiac arrest.

Eight Congress legislators of West Bengal were injured Wednesday when they were allegedly attacked by armed Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) cadres at Mongolkote.

The attack took place when a 14-member delegation led by Congress Legislative Party (CLP) chief Manas Bhuinya had gone to Dhanyarukhi village in Burdwan district Wednesday to distribute relief material among party supporters whose houses were burnt after the murder of CPI-M district committee member Falguni Mukherjee.

Seven journalists who had gone to the spot to cover the delegation's visit were also injured as they were allegedly beaten up by CPI-M cadres and hit by bricks. Five journalists had to be taken to hospital.

The area has been restive since Mukherjee was shot dead at point blank range June 16.

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