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'Send food, not force to Lalgarh'

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KOLKATA: Food, and not force is the answer to solve the Lalgarh crisis. Noted writer Mahasweta Devi has asked the Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee government not to arrest Chhatradhar Mahato, the People's Committee against Police Atrocities (PCPA) leader.

"If Chhatradhar Mahato is arrested, I'll go and sit on a dharna outside the office of Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee. This is not the time to send force to Lalgarh," she told reporters in Kolkata on Monday.

"Whatever the state government is doing is wrong. People are fighting unitedly for certain demands. Respect it. The state government has snatched the rights of people living in Jangalmahal," she said.

Mahasweta Devi said the Lalgarh movement was another example of the Left Front government's failure.

"This is one more reason why this government should go. It came with much fanfare but has done nothing for the tribals. The state forest department has protected contractors involved in illegal felling of trees. This has resulted in the loss of livelihood for the forest-dwellers. There are no roads, no water, no electricity. There is no other state like Bengal where the tribals are so deprived."

The veteran writer said, "The people of Lalgarh have organised themselves to solve their problem. It's a shame that the state government has declared war on a section of its own people. Give Lalgarh people BPL cards, drinking water, solar lights and see what happens."

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