

# Several injured in communal violence in Bengal's Murshidabad; internet suspended

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A huge police contingent, including rapid action force, has been deployed at the affected neighbourhoods

**Berhampore:** Several people were injured in communal clashes at Beldanga town and surrounding areas in Bengal's Murshidabad district on Saturday night, police said.



Police said all the officers who earlier served in the Beldanga zone have been brought back temporarily from their current locations in view of the violence. (Representational image)

The superintendent of police (SP), Surya Pratap Yadav said on Sunday, "Several persons have been injured and several detained." He did not share the exact figures.



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Local residents claimed that at least 50 people from both communities suffered injuries and more than 30 houses were either ransacked or set on fire. The worst affected area, they said, is Beldanga's civic ward 10.

The authorities deployed a huge police contingent, including rapid action force, at the affected neighbourhoods and shut down internet facilities across the entire Murshidabad district until 8am on November 19.

The district has West Bengal's highest Muslim population of 66.28% according to the 2011 census. Malda, the adjacent district, has the state's second highest Muslim population of 51.27 %.

"The clashes started during the celebration of Kartick puja by the community clubs at Beldanga. It is alleged that a sacrilegious comment was written with bulbs on an electrical display board. This triggered tension around 8.30pm on Saturday," a local police officer said, requesting anonymity.

"Four Beldanga residents, including a woman, have been admitted at Berhampore Medical College and Hospital. A rapid action force personnel also suffered injury while trying to stop the back-to-back clashes," the officer added.

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Although the authorities did not clamp prohibitory orders in the affected zone in view of the festival which continued on Sunday on a low scale, police did not allow the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s former Bengal unit president Dilip Ghosh to visit



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Beldanga, was escorted out of the district by a police team, officials said.

Former state Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who represented the Berhampore Lok Sabha seat five times before being defeated earlier this year by Yusuf Pathan of the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC), visited the hospital to inquire about the injured people.

“The administration has taken the right steps. We are cooperating with the government. I appeal to all to maintain harmony. All communities have lived peacefully in Murshidabad for centuries,” Chowdhury said.

No fresh clash was reported till Sunday afternoon.

“All police officers who earlier served in the Beldanga zone have been brought back temporarily from their current locations in view of the situation,” an officer said.

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