

Bhima Koregaon caste violence in Pune: Protests in Mumbai, trains halted over clashes

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Mumbai: The anger over marking the 200th anniversary of Bhima Koregaon battle in Pune district of Maharashtra continued today as protestors disrupted suburbs and local train services on the Harbour Line.

The protesters blocked roads in several areas of Mumbai, forced shops to shut down and also attacked a journalist of a television news channel.

In a latest development, the central railway suspended suburban services between Kurla and Vashi on its harbour corridor and is running special services between CSMT-Kurla and Vashi-Panvel section.

An announcement regarding the same is being made at all stations of the central railway.

Angered over the death of a person at the event organised to mark the anniversary in Pune yesterday, several groups of people had come out in protest this morning in the eastern suburbs of Chembur, Vikhroli, Mankhurd and Govandi, and forced shops and establishments to shut down, an official said.

A news channel journalist was attacked by a group of protesters in the Amar Mahal area. However, he escaped unhurt, eyewitnesses said.

Hundreds of protesters gathered in Priyadarshini, Kurla, Sidharth Colony and Amar Mahal areas on the Eastern Express Highway, took out processions and raised slogans against the government and the administration, he said.

The protesters stopped local train services at the Govandi and Chembur railway stations of the Harbour Line.

Central Railway's Chief PRO Sunil Udasi said the agitators came out on tracks and stopped the suburban services, though the railways has nothing to do with the incident.

The event to mark 200th anniversary of the Bhima-Koregaon battle, in which forces of the East India Company defeated Peshwa's army, was yesterday marred by incidents of violence, in which one person was killed.

Dalit leaders commemorate the British victory, as it is believed that soldiers from the Mahar community -- then considered untouchable -- were part of the East India Company's forces.

However, some right-wing groups in Pune had expressed opposition to celebration of the British victory.

Meanwhile, in suburban Mulund, shop owners complied with the request of protesters to shut their establishments, a police official said.

In the Ramabai Ambedkar Nagar, some angry protesters pelted a bus with stones, breaking its window panes, according to sources.

Heavy security has been deployed in the eastern suburbs to check any untoward incidents, a senior police official said.

The Mumbai police issued a statement appealing people not to believe in rumours and to verify facts with the police before posting anything on social media.

The police said vehicular movement on the Eastern Express Highway was affected due to the protests in the morning, but later it was normal.

The vehicular movement was also hit at the Chembur Naka, police said, appealing people not to panic.

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