

Dated: 04. 01. 2018

Enclosed is the news clipping appeared in the 'Statesman', an English daily dated 04.01.2018, the news item is captioned " Balurghat woman brandedas witch, ostracized from village"

District Magistrate, Dakshin Dinajpur is directed to furnish a report by 8th February, 2018.

Superintendent of Police, Dakshin Dinajpur is also directed to furnish a report by 8th February, 2018.

(Justice Girish Chandra Gupta)

Chairperson

(Naparajit Mukherjee)

Member

(M.S. Dwivedy)

Member

Balurghat woman branded as witch, ostracised from village

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BALURGHAT, 3 JANUARY

Villagers of Dhaul under the Balurghat police station in South Dinajpur have ostracised Rabin Hansda's family for allegedly practicing witchcraft.

The villagers have alleged that Hansda's wife, Dulaly Soren, has been practicing witchcraft for the past one month. Hansda claimed that the villagers have threatened him with death.

The villagers arranged for a meeting in the village on 27 December and warned the family, especially Mrs Hansda, against practicing witchcraft. The same day, Rabin Hansda informed the Pradhan of the Chakvrigue gram panchayat about the matter and the meeting.

The panchayat in turn informed the Block Development Officer of the matter and on 2 January, joint BDO

of Balurghat block, Ratnajit Das, visited the village and talked with the villagers.

He, however, failed to solve the problem and the family is still being ostracised and are being threatened, sources said. Mr Hansda's three girls are studying in the Nadipar Girls' School in Chakvrigue. They have also stopped going to school and are unable to move about freely in the village. Dhaul village is dominated by a tribal population, and it is just four km away from Balurghat. Most of the students in the village are first generation learners. There is a primary school in the village and most of the families have an electricity connection in their houses. They are also aware of all the modern amenities.

"Sickness has become common in every family in the village and the families are suffering due to the witchcraft practiced by Dulaly Soren. We have instructed them to stop

this; otherwise they will be banished from the village," a villager, Sumana Soren, said.

"I know nothing about witchcraft. I only worship Kali Mata in my house, but the villagers are suspecting me to be a witch. The villagers have ostracised us since the past one month. They have not talked to us and they do not even allow us to take water from the public water pump. They are threatening us every moment."

"We are helpless. The administration should take steps to solve our problem and ensure safety," said Dulaly Soren. "We have not received any specific complaint from the family. But since the family complained to the panchayat, we visited the village and talked with the villagers to understand the problem," said the inspector-in-charge of the Balurghat police station, Sanjoy Ghosh.