Four landmines were unearthed from a Ranibandh block village in Bankura last evening. The Chief Minister visited the block last week to inaugurate a tribal school and district police and intelligence had been on high-alert as the area has a history of insurgency related activities.

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Four live landmines were planted in the Majhgoria crossing on the zilla parishad owned Fulkusma-Satnala road stretch. Police suspect PW-MCC ultras to be behind the act. The matter was brought to the notice of district police officials after the villagers of Majhgoria sought police intervention. A combined police team from Ranibandh, Raipur, detected and unearthed the mines from the spot. The SP, Bankura, Mr Anil Kumar said: ‘The locals noticed a some unknown persons digging on the road stretch at about 4.30 a.m. yesterday.’ The strangers told locals that repair work on the road was underway.

The villagers suspected mischief after the workers vanished from the scene soon after. Also, police after taking up the matter with the Ranibandh panchayat samity came to know there was no official work order for any repair work on the stretch. The area is only a few kilometres from Belpahari, Midnapore West, a PW-MCC infiltrated zone. Police finally dug out the landmines planted about six inches inside the road surface from the place, Mr Anil Kumar said. The cops raided a number of villages to locate the hideouts of the Naxalites in Ranibandh and Raipur. Till last late night, police led an ambush but none could be arrested. The neighbouring Midnapore West police was also involved in the raid. A joint raid in the jungle stretches has been planned tomorrow night. The matter was conveyed to Writers' Buildings last night. A CID team from Kolkata is likely to reach Ranibandh to examine the potential and character of the explosives used in the landmines. The Ranibandh, Sarenga, Raipur and Shimlapal blocks of Bankura have witnessed massive Naxalite activity since 2001. Three CPI-M district committee leaders have been murdered by the ultras in the last four years in these areas, which are covered by jungles and high terrain. A number of MCC-PW men were nabbed after the Purulia landmine incident last year. After the incident, police claimed that Bankura had been freed from the menace. The Western Zone police headquarters though, maintain that the blocks serve as a safe corridor for ultras trying to navigating to Jharkhand, Bihar and various pockets of the state.

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