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## Farmers call for 'rail roko' from noon to 4 p.m. today

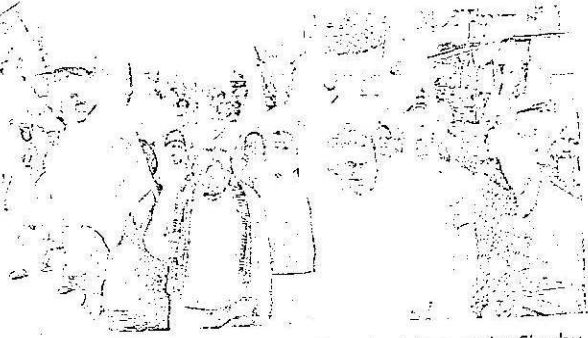
They hope it will force the government to break deadlock

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Farm unions have called for a nationwide 'rail roko' on Thursday, between noon and 4 p.m., which they hope will force the government to break the deadlock over the three farm laws. However, the response to a similar highway protest earlier this month suggests that the mass impact of such blockades may be limited to a few States.

The Railways have also focussed on Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal in the deployment of 20,000 additional security personnel ahead of the protest. The call has been issued by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella group of most of the unions participating in the agitation.

**Remain peaceful: Tikait**  
"From 12 noon to 4 p.m., farmers will stop trains by going to the nearest railway station. They will welcome the trains with flower gar-



On the move: Protesters arriving from Ludhiana at the Singhu border in Delhi on Tuesday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

lands and then communicate with passengers. They will also provide water, milk and tea to the passengers," said Bharatiya Kisan Union-Tikait leader Rakesh Tikait, on the eve of the protest.

He appealed to the farmers to remain peaceful and to commuters to take time to listen to the farmers' demands.

"A successful rail roko will force the government to break the deadlock," said Kul Hind Kisan Sabha leader Baldev Singh Nihalgarh.

The SKM leaders hope

that the series of mahapanchayats, or large rural gatherings, of the last two weeks will bear fruit in increased involvement in the 'rail roko'.

In a statement, the SKM alleged that "goons" from the Vishwa Hindu Parishad had attacked a peaceful protest that was being organised by a farmers' group called the All India Krushak Khet Mazdoor Sangathan in Muzaffarpur on Wednesday.

"I appeal to everyone to maintain peace," said Arun Kumar, DGP of the RPF.

(With PTI inputs)