

Maoists regrouping in Andhra Pradesh

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Hyderabad: An aggressive push by the government post 2004 might have blunted Maoist insurgency, but the rebels are suspected to be regrouping in a big way raising the sceptre of fresh violence in Andhra Pradesh. If documents claimed to have been recovered by intelligence agencies are to be believed, the top Maoist leadership is concentrating on reviving the movement particularly in North Telangana.

Intelligence sources claim that there is increased movement in areas where the guerrillas have sought refuge along the North Telangana forest border with Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Highly-placed sources told TOI that the Maoist party is planning to restore its glory in North Telangana by launching agitations against open cast mines of Singareni Collieries, an issue which is likely to have local support. Towards this end, the extremist party has reactivated its frontal organisation, Singareni Karmika Samakya (Sikasa), which has a strong presence among the coal miners.

“The strategy is to keep one arm of movement above the ground and another below the ground,” analysts said. The recent spurt in Maoist attacks in Karimnagar, Adilabad and Warangal districts is an indication that they are on their comeback trail. Sources said the rebels could resort to ambushes and surprise attacks in the coming days what with top Maoist Mupalla Lakshmana Rao alias Ganapathi talking about revival of the movement in North Telangana.

In fact, party central committee leader Mallojula Koteswar Rao alias Kishanji recently made it clear that his party would fight against Singareni Collieries management’s decision to dig open cast mines. Sikasa organising secretary Janjipalli Sridhar even issued a statement in Mancherial warning Congress and TDP leaders of dire consequences for supporting SCCL. “The Maoists have changed their strategies. The open cast mining issue has come in handy for them to attract coal miners to their fold,” a police official said.

The Maoists believe that the events of the last few years which saw them succumbing out of the state, was a temporary setback for them. “Their strategy is simple — develop more bases in the surrounding regions of North Telangana before hitting back strongly,” he said. Analysts said Maoists could form more guerrilla and Red resistance zones to take on Greyhounds, the elite commando force.

Though there are about 450 extremists in the state, some 150 Maoists led by top leader Pulluri Prasada Rao alias Chandranna are active in North Telangana districts. “Every time the authorities felt Maoists were losing ground, the rebels bounced back by resorting to surprise attacks,” an analyst said. Ever since the peace talks broke down in early 2005, the Maoist party had lost over 350 cadre, including top leaders.

“Many leaders have shifted base to Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Orissa. They would of course try to make a comeback but we cannot lower our guard,” a top IPS officer involved in anti-naxal operations said. But what is bothering the police top brass is the reported nexus between the Maoists and Tamil Tigers, who are experts in triggering explosives.

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