

Centre pushes prosperity for peace

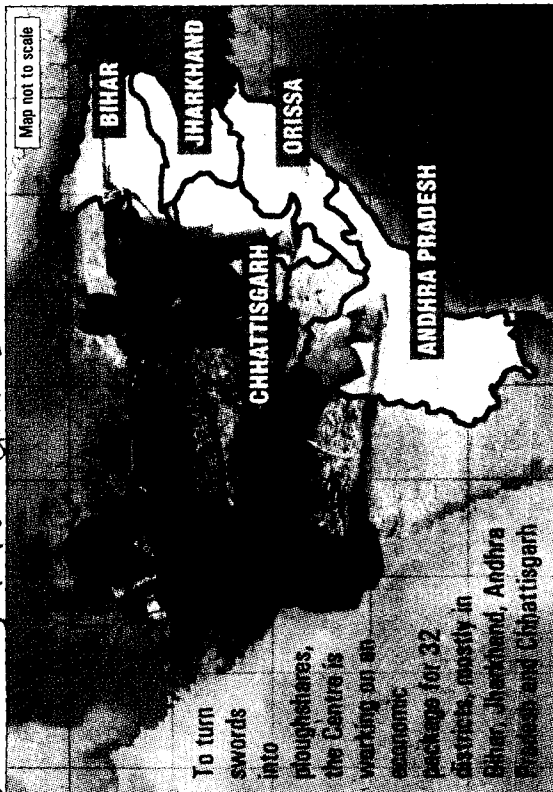
Srinjoy Chowdhury in New Delhi

Dec. 21. — The Centre is preparing a peace-through-prosperity scheme for Naxalite-hit districts to help them in turning swords into ploughshares.

According to the plan, the Centre is preparing an economic package for 32 districts — mostly in Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh — where People's War and such other outfits are active. Sixteen districts will benefit in the current year and the others in 2004-05.

A similar package for 20 districts in special category states is being readied and this includes seven districts in insurgency-hit Assam, Manipur and Nagaland and three of the worst militant-affected ones in J&K — Doda, Kupwara and Poonch.

The Backward Districts Initiative aims to provide Rs 15 crore annually for three years to improve agricultural productivity, reduce unemployment and build infrastructure. The government will be funding and implementing



the projects. NGOs will also help in planning, implementation and monitoring.

The projects would concentrate on the agricultural sector, including soil conservation, afforestation, wasteland development, horticulture and minor irrigation. They would also help in the development of roads, power, health, education and handloom and other

Khamman in Andhra Pradesh; Gaya, Jehanabad, Rohtas, Kaimur, Palamau, Chatra, Latchar, Koderma and Bokaro in Bihar and Jharkhand; Kawardha and Rajnandgaon in Chhattisgarh; Orissa's Ganjam and Mayurbhanj districts and Dindori in Madhya Pradesh.

Next year, the other 16 — Medak, Nalgonda and Nizamabad in Andhra Pradesh; Aurangabad, Nalanda, Patna and Bhojpur in Bihar; Hazaribagh, Garhwa, Ranchi, Giridih and Dhanbad in Jharkhand; Sarguja and Jashpur in Chhattisgarh; Gajapati in Orissa and Chandauli in Bihar — will be covered.

The entire project — the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana — aims to identify and improve the country's 100 backward districts and also, the districts in the "special" states, mostly in the North-east and areas affected by political violence.

Of these 100 districts, eight are in West Bengal — Purulia, South 24 Parganas, Jalpaiguri, Midnapore West, South and North Dinajpur, Bankura, Birbhum. Purulia and Jalpaiguri are among the 25 districts to be covered this year.

er related industries. The veterinary sector will also get importance and if there is a possibility, IT-related jobs will be created.

All this, the Planning Commission believes, will reduce the economic helplessness and the resultant anger that drive people towards extremism.

The 16 districts included in this year's plan are Karimnagar and

Naxalites appeal to Ulfa

29/11 9-5
OUR CORRESPONDENT

Patna, Nov. 28: The Maoist Communist Centre and the People's War have appealed to the United Liberation Front of Asom to stop killing migrant Biharis and identify the real enemy.

"The Centre's anti-national mindset and the policy of repression of nationalist movements is the real cause for the present attack," asserted a press release jointly issued by the two organisations. "The Bihari migrants in Assam are victims of the ruling class and the present attack on them is strengthening the hands of the oppressor."

The two banned groups said they had been supporting the cause of self-rule for people of Assam as the Ulfa had not taken a communal stand. But the Ulfa now has to be careful not to divide the proletariat by succumbing to the politics of regionalism, they said.

The MCC and People's War held the Shiv Sena and supporters of MP Pappu Yadav responsible for the violence in Bihar against people from Assam.

The real problem is unemployment, which is a result of the imperialist, feudal and bureaucratic present regime, said the release. Private economy and the open market are anti-people, it added.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) has echoed these sentiments, saying the BJP and the Congress have played up the regional interests at the cost of the people of Bihar and Assam.

Whiff of Naxalite hand in explosions, 10 people injured

Twin blasts strike police

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Salboni (West Midnapore), Nov. 27: Almost two months after the fatal Bandwan blast in Purulia, another police team today ran into twin explosions set off by suspected People's War activists but escaped with injuries.

Ten people were hurt when the jeep the police team was travelling in hurtled into the four-foot-deep crater, about six feet in diameter, gouged out by the simultaneous explosions around 12.15 pm at Birghosa, about 175 km from Calcutta.

Five policemen, the driver and four others who were picked up for interrogation escaped death as the blasts occurred seconds before the vehicle passed over the spot. The injured were taken to a health centre in Salboni. Two of them were

referred to the Midnapore district hospital.

The police team from the Pirakata outpost was returning after a raid on Birbhanpur village in search of People's War members. The force was led by inspector-in-charge of the outpost Amarjit Biswas.

"We were headed to our outpost after the raid when we were rocked by the powerful double explosions. Before the driver could realise anything, the jeep plunged into the huge crater," Biswas said.

When they limped out of the jeep, the suspected Naxalites waiting on the other side of the crater opened fire. The police retaliated. "We fired about 20 rounds. The militants returned seven to eight rounds," a police official said.

The rebels later disappeared

into a nearby forest. The police suspect at least one of them suffered a bullet wound.

District superintendent of police Praveen Kumar, who visited the spot, said a 100-foot wire used to detonate the explosives was found near the crater.

"We are certain the blast was set off by People's War rebels and the wire was used to detonate the explosive buried under the *kuccha* road that runs over an embankment of the irrigation canal," he said.

Today's explosions triggered memories of the landmine blast in Bandwan on October 11 that killed the officer-in-charge of the police station there, Nilmahab Das.

The latest explosions have confirmed the suspicion of the police that People's War members are active in the area. "The

spot where the explosion took place is 9 km from the village we raided and we are now certain there are active Naxalites in the area," an official said.

The police are now trying to find out when the explosives were planted. "We travelled by the same road when we set out for the raid. There are two possibilities. Either the militants let us pass over the explosives or they planted the explosives after we went past the area. In either case, they knew that a police team was visiting the area. That indicates the rebels have an active intelligence network, which is alarming," an official said.

A large force comprising members of the Eastern Frontier Rifles, the Special Combat Force and the armed police has been despatched and the forest is being combed.

Tackling terrorism

H/S/B
Sanctioning funds not enough 7/11

The near-fatal attack by Naxalites on Chandrababu Naidu followed in quick succession by another assault in Purulia district in West Bengal in which a police convoy was trapped near a forest and the local OC sprayed with bullets — again by extremists — must have shaken state administrations out of their slumber. It is clear now that the Naxalite menace is not confined to small pockets but is rapidly expanding over a large area and that they are also trying to establish lines of communication running through different states.

Perhaps that is why central and state police and intelligence agencies have got together to form a coordination committee and examine the problem in the larger context of support for the local police and development activities for people. It is no secret that most of the Naxalite-affected regions in Andhra, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh, Orissa and West Bengal are extremely backward and have suffered neglect over a long period of time. The extremist groups have exploited the people's distress to expand their bases even though they are themselves hopelessly divided into several factions.

It is some consolation that the Centre has woken up to the problem and decided to pump Rs 2,475 crore into development work in the Naxalite-infested states in order to reassure the people of the government's concern. The amount is substantial and should provide for jobs and other essentials in the far-flung areas, unless misused. The question survives as to why the government took so long to act. Nipped in the bud, the extremists may not have become so well organised as to strike terror in the hearts of policemen who have been the main targets.

The Union home secretary said in Bhubaneswar after the conference that people's resistance had been increasing. Even if that is true, it does not go to the root of the problem which is to reassure the people of backward regions that the government is concerned about their future. Quite contrary to the official's point of view, there is another perception that the Naxalites could not have thrived without support at the grassroots level.

In Bihar, in particular, the Naxalites are the only source of strength for peasants who come under repeated and deadly assaults from landlord armies like the Ranvir Sena. The government has done nothing to help when massacres have taken place, or when these have been followed by equally bloody reprisals in which Naxalites have attacked policemen. The cycle of violence can be checked only if the government decides to play a proactive and impartial role and local administrations are seen to be more sensitive. It is not enough to sanction funds and imagine that the problem will solve itself. There is the bigger task of ensuring that the funds are properly utilised.

That itself is an area of huge concern given the experience of diversion and misappropriation of relief during disasters like the Orissa cyclone. If the Naxalite problem has to be solved, the government must display a considerable degree of social concern and earnestness. It may be a little too late already but it is still worth trying.

PW, MCC plan subcontinental revolution

SHAHID PERVEZ
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Oct. 25. — Red star over South Asia? The two leading and outlawed Naxalite organisations in the country, People's War (PW) and Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), are heading for unification in the coming months. They plan to up the ante on violence and are keen on "ideological" partnership with not only Maoists of Nepal but also groups fighting for "nationality" causes. These, in Naxalite definition, will include the LTTE and North-east and Kashmir ultras.

Even if a part of this plan works out, the ramifications could be staggering for the country's political leadership and security agencies. Naxalite sources told **The Statesman**, quoting PW politburo member Ramji, that the process of the unification had reached a "decisive stage" and would be completed within months.

The leaderships of the PW and MCC have been negotiating for months and they've ironed out most of their ideological and tactical differences. Nepalese Maoists and some other South Asian ultra-Left groups are playing a key role to

bring about a unity in their ranks. The PW and MCC are also holding joint meetings involving the "masses" to signal their upcoming unification, the sources said.

The two Naxalite outfits will be re-christened upon their unification, with the word Maoist to be added to CPI-ML People's War. They will be able to pool their operational and strategic expertise, giving more teeth to their organisation and guerrilla apparatus. The unified outfit will have about 12,000 armed guerrillas.

Ramji was also quoted as having said that the Naxalites were gear-

ing up to expand their bases and launch an "armed struggle" across South Asia. He admitted the PW's "close bonds" with Nepalese Maoists, saying they share "their political and military experiences". Earlier unity talks between the PW and the MCC had broken down. "This time, however, unification is a very real possibility."

The CPI-ML Party Unity, which operated in undivided Bihar, had merged with the PW a few years ago. PW chief Ganapathy had then underlined the "huge significance of the merger", making it clear that unification was the only way to car-

ry forward the "Indian revolution against imperialist repression and exploitation". Even PU secretary Prasad had on the occasion stressed on bringing the MCC close even though the two outfits had been locked in a violent turf fight in Bihar.

Despite the State's continuing crackdown, the Naxalite groups are gaining in strength and are spreading their bases. The unification would clearly make the already formidable PW and MCC more lethal while paving the way for merger of other splinter groups with the combine.

The PW is well-entrenched in Dandakaranya (DK), which stretches through tribal-inhabited forest areas of AP, Maharashtra, Orissa, MP and Chhatisgarh. PW central committee member Lachanna said they would make DK their "base area".

The outfits are said to have links with the LTTE, North-eastern ultra groups such as the NSCN-IM, and even with Kashmiri militants. While not disclosing the details, Ganapathy had said it was part of the PW's policy to have links with all "militant Communist" and "nationality" movements.

THE STATESMAN

26 OCT 2003

An insidious campaign

*9 P.P.
CP (ML)
(PW)
19/10*

IT IS something like oil being spilled on a water surface. The drops quickly spread out, the isolated spots offering a myriad changing colours. They start drifting slowly, sooner or later, they join together to form bigger spots and these join again to form an oil slick. If oil continues to be spilled, it turns into a major slick, difficult to remove.

The oil-spot analogy is perhaps relevant to the growth of Left Wing extremist activity throughout the country, particularly during the last two decades or so. From being mired in obscurity and fighting for a New Democratic Revolution (NDR), a Utopian concept for many, the revolutionary movement in India has indeed made big strides, notwithstanding the claims by different governments.

The armed insurrection hitherto was confined to isolated pockets of backward and inaccessible areas of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. But it has now emerged as a unified one that has not only withstood the periodical crackdowns, but also

issues. Armed squads are present but there would not be many 'class actions'. Once people are mobilised, the armed squads begin action targeting the traditional structures of exploitation. People welcome this and help the naxals consolidate their base. Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan fall into this category for the PW.

In the guerrilla phase, the movement is sub-classified into preparatory and advanced stages. In the preparatory stage, armed squads undertake 'shoot-and-scoot' operations mainly to confuse the police forces. Ambush of patrol teams and sneak attacks on politicians attempt to create a political vacuum at the village level, to be filled by grama rajya committees consisting of people from different walks of life. The advanced stage of the guerrilla phase would be a situation where the revolutionary has an upper hand over the state, practically manning a parallel government. Going by the strategies and

From being confined to isolated backward pockets of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, the naxalites have spread their network across several States, says K. Srinivas Reddy.

managed to spread to new areas.

Ideological differences led to splits; there has been reunification of these splinter groups. At present, the CPI-ML People's War (PW) has a strong presence in eight States, and significant presence in another seven. The other major extremist party that can be counted is the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) of Bihar. According to a rough estimate, the naxalite movement has a presence in 53 districts in about 15 States. While the MCC activities are more or less confined to Bihar, the PW has expanded its base rapidly. Formed in Andhra Pradesh on April 22, 1980 by Kondapalli Seetaramaiah, one of the most revered ideologues of naxalites, the PW saw its 'ebb and tide' stages in Andhra Pradesh as successive State Governments adopted different strategies to tackle the problem. Interestingly, while the PW could not penetrate the towns and urban areas, it managed to strengthen its base in tribal areas in jungles and in areas abutting the forests, where the Government's hold is rather weak.

The PW movement has formed several guerrilla zones and is attempting to establish guerrilla bases in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Maharashtra and West Bengal. In States like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala in south India and Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab in the north, the PW is trying to expand its activities.

Its methods vary from State to State and area to area, depending on the stage of revolution, as the party hierarchy sees it. The PW movement can be classified broadly into organisation, guerrilla and liberated stages. In the first, the cadres do not necessarily indulge in violence, but concentrate on 'mobilising' people on various

tactics of the PW, its movement is in the guerrilla phase in Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and in the adjoining areas of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Jharkhand. The PW is talking of forming two guerrilla bases in the Dandakaranya area covering continuous forest tracts in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

A review of the current stage of the movement all over the country done by the PW Central Committee (CC) has some interesting angles. According to the CC, in Andhra Pradesh (excluding Telangana districts), the Andhra-Orissa border districts and Dandakaranya, the revolutionary movement has intensified. The Nallamala-Guntur zone in Andhra Pradesh and the Koil-Kaimur-Magadh zone in the north have reached the guerrilla zone phase, while the movement has weakened in north and south Telangana districts. The CC document says the movement has spread to Uttaranchal and Kerala, while in Karnataka, its focus shifted from the Hyderabad-Karnataka region comprising Bijapur, Raichur and Gulbarga to the Malnad area. The disputes between local people and the Government over forestlands and the plantation labourers' problems are being taken up by the PW.

The PW is of the view that it has not made much progress in Maharashtra, especially in the Gondia-Balaghat areas. The movement has weakened in Punjab, while in Tamil Nadu, it is stagnating because of the intensified police raids. But in West Bengal, the PW claims it has been able to unite forces against the ruling CPI (M).

The three recent major developments on the revolutionary front are: The understanding the PW reached with the MCC to form a



The wreckage of Chandrababu Naidu's car that was blasted by the People's War.

broad-based united front on issues; formation of a Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations in South Asia (CCOMPOSA) two years ago; and the formation of a Compact Revolutionary Zone (CRZ) from the forest tracts of Adilabad (Andhra Pradesh) to Nepal traversing the forest areas of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar.

The understanding between the PW and the MCC has not only paved the way for stopping internecine clashes, but also helped in the CRZ becoming a reality. The CCOMPOSA formation is significant because it established fraternal ties with revolutionary groups outside India.

The coalition consists of the PW, the MCC, the Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (MLM), the Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (Maoist), all from India, the Purba Bangla Sarbahara Party and the Bangladesh Samajwadi Party (ML) from Bangladesh, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), and the Communist Party of Ceylon (Maoist).

Choosing targets

THREE DAYS after the abortive attempt on the life of the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu, the People's War (PW) extremists carried out a successful attack on another target in Guntur district. This time, their victim was not a high-profile person, but Sambasiva Rao, a driver in the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation.

Anyone who opposes the naxalites' tactics automatically becomes

a target "fit" to be eliminated. Caught between the devil and the deep is the vast majority of the neutral and uncommitted masses.

The PW has undoubtedly expanded its base from a few pockets of resistance in Telangana in the early 1980s to many States within two decades. But it has also suffered setbacks in the Telangana districts, which were earlier hailed as beacons of the revolutionary movement.

However, in Andhra Pradesh, the key element that continues to help the naxalites hold sway over a section of society is the widening gap between the expectations on development, as promised by the State Government, and the ground reality. A number of Government programmes launched for poverty alleviation such as Velugu, or for the development of women under the DWCRA scheme, or the recently launched grandiose Rytu Mitra Groups (RMGs), are seen as benefiting only the ruling Telugu Desam

Party workers.

Take the example of the Food for Work (FFW) scheme under which foodgrains were supplied in lieu of wages during one of the worst spells of drought in the State recently. The irregularities came in handy for the PW to mobilise people against the 'contractors', though, despite large-scale misappropriation, the FFW scheme helped people to some extent. Similar are the cases of other development activities, be it land distribution or allotment of houses or laying of roads.

The PW went to the people pointing out the lapses, and what they called the 'real motive' of the ruling party.

The Government's communications machinery has been at a disadvantage. To make matters worse, the hype over 'effective monitoring' through hi-tech video-conferences between Mr. Naidu and his officials has only led to a reverse impact, since people at the field level know the efficacy of the system.

Another factor that helps the naxalites is the Government's inadequacies in responding to the people's immediate needs. While the laying of a road to make a village accessible is of vital importance, the new facility is of little use without a helping hand to improve the production centres in the village. The roads help businessmen send consignments. But the benefit will reach the villagers only if the Government helps with farm inputs and finance. This is not happening, concedes a senior official involved in anti-extremist operations.

The civil administration is not involved in addressing the problems. It is the police who are forced to take up remedial measures in most of the affected areas, with non-police departments shrugging off their responsibility. An incongruous scene is the police organising health camps and veterinary camps in affected villages, with the designated departmental heads looking the other way. — K.S.R.

Dy PM's development strategy to fight Naxalites

HT Correspondent
Hyderabad, October 3

EXPRESSING SERIOUS concern over the growing Left wing extremism, Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani on Friday said the government should adopt a two-pronged strategy to effectively contain the insurgents.

"On one hand, rapid development of backward areas should be taken up and on the other, extremist activities should be firmly dealt with," Advani said in an informal chat with reporters at the Begumpet airport before leaving for Delhi.

The Deputy Prime Minister flew down to the city to call on Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, who survived an assassination attempt by suspected PWG Naxalites at Tirupati on October 1.

Advani said he had "discussions with officials with respect to the security aspect."

Affirming that the Naxalism problem can be tackled by adopting two simultaneous moves, the DPM said it can be done first by ensuring rapid development of backward areas to drastically better the socio-economic condition of the populace on one hand, and second, by taking very stern action against those indulging in violence.

Reiterating that the government is pursuing with the policy of containing terrorism, Advani said stern measures clubbed with developmental activities are being taken up in all the Naxal-hit states.

A core committee headed by Union Secretary for Home with Director Generals of Police of all Left wing-governed states have been working on the anti-Naxal operations, he said.

Stating that the incident (attack on Naidu) is of serious concern to all people who have



President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu in Hyderabad on Friday. Naidu escaped a PW landmine attack on Wednesday.

All you wanted to know about People's War

GENESIS

Formed in Andhra Pradesh in 1980 by K. Seetharamiah, a Naxalite leader. He was later expelled from the group and died unsung on April 12, 2002.

OBJECTIVES

Traces ideology to Mao Zedong's theory of peasant insurrection. Rejects parliamentary democracy and believes in installing 'people's government' through armed struggle

AREAS OF OPERATION

North Telangana: Khammam,

Warangal, Karimnagar, Nizamnabad, Adilabad

South Telangana: Mehboobnagar, Nalgonda, Medak

Rayalseema Region: Anantpur, Kurruol

North Coastal Andhra: East Godavari, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam

South Coastal Andhra: Guntur

LEADERSHIP

Muppala Lakshminar Rao, alias Ganapathi, is general secretary. The central committee is the

highest policy making body, polls to which were held in 2001

EXTERNAL LINKS

Has links with LTTE and other Maoist outfits in South Asia

CADRE STRENGTH

Has 1,100 underground cadres and 5,000 overground activists

SOURCE OF INCOME

Extortion is the main source. Crores collected from traders, contractors businessmen and professionals

Our guerrillas were behind blast: PW

Press trust of India
Hyderabad, October 3

THE PEOPLE'S War on Friday claimed responsibility for the attack on N. Chandrababu Naidu, even as the Andhra Pradesh government appointed a high-level inquiry committee to probe into the entire gamut of security mechanism in the state and suspended two police officers.

In a four-page statement issued to some vernacular dailies, PW state secretary Ramkrishna and two others claimed responsibility for the attack and defended their action saying "It was a judicious move to eliminate a person, who has been perpetuating state-sponsored violence".

Describing Naidu as a "World Bank agent", the PW said the act was in protest against anti-people policies being adopted by state government and the killing of innocent people in fake encounters.

A few days before the attack, two PW members were tortured and killed in a fake encounter in Hyderabad by special police force, the statement said.

Imposing ban on people's movements to appease multi-national companies and launching a middle range battle on mass movement besides encouraging state violence were some of the charges PW made against Naidu.

The statement, also signed by Telangana Special Zonal Committee secretary M. Bhas-

kar and Andhra-Orissa border committee secretary M. Balakrishna, said: "The guerrilla army of People's War has carried out the attack."

"People who are condemning our action should also consider the state-sponsored violence in which one hundreds of innocent people were killed in fake encounters," the statement said.

The state government, meanwhile, constituted a high-level inquiry commission to probe into security lapses and suspended two police officers including the Chittoor SP.

The commission, to be headed by retired DGP of Uttar Pradesh Prakash Singh, would study the entire gamut of security system, look into the lapses that led to claymore landmine blasts at Tirupati and suggest measures to prevent recurrence of such incidents, state Home Minister T. Devender Goud told reporters.

The commission would submit its report in two months, he said.

Singh, who had also served in the Border Security Force, had been chosen for the job in view of his vast experience in anti-insurgency operations in the North-eastern states, the minister said.

Apart from setting up inquiry commission, the government has also appointed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by a senior IPS officer D.T. Naik to specifically probe the Wednesday's attack.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2003

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ASSASSINATION AS POLITICS

THE AUTHORS OF the deadly claymore mine blasts in Tirupati, of all places, narrowly failed in their latest bid to take out the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu. Given the cumulative force of the cunningly planned explosions, it was the armoured, 'bullet-proof' Ambassador car in which the Chief Minister and his party colleagues were travelling that proved a life-saver: it gave them a chance of survival in the first place. The rest of the story of survival must be attributed to sheer luck. By all accounts, including the photographic, the Chief Minister showed presence of mind, personal fortitude, and solicitude for colleagues in the face of the gravest danger. *The Hindu* congratulates Mr. Naidu and the people of Andhra Pradesh on this extraordinary escape and wishes him and his more seriously injured colleagues a speedy recovery.

This dastardly terrorist attack brings into focus the fanatical belief of the ultra-left extremist party, the CPI-ML People's War (PW), in assassination and terror as the pith and substance of politics. In this respect, the PW can be likened to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) guerrillas of Peru, both claiming to represent liberation or revolutionary causes while specialising in killing sprees. Despite some success in unifying scattered naxalite groups and factions and linking up with new extremist pockets, the PW finds its 'revolutionary' armed struggle reduced to isolated actions of killer squads. This is not people's war, but excitative terrorism at its most grotesque. By carrying out a high precision attack on the Chief Minister's convoy, the PW might have revived its fading image in Andhra Pradesh and dispelled the notion that the State has nearly succeeded in controlling it. The attack also demonstrates that although the movement seems to be at a low ebb in the Telangana

districts, its underground cadre possess dangerous military strike capability. The PW cadres' killing spree has gone under the name of the Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign. The State must avoid the temptation of responding in kind, that is, through resort to assassination of naxalites or their sympathisers in the name of counter-terror. In the present situation, where the political and ideological basis of the armed extremists has declined steadily, some amount of legitimacy is being accorded to 'encounter' killings, for which sections of the State's police have acquired national notoriety. While the PW must be further isolated politically and put down with a stern hand, there must be scrupulous respect for democratic and human rights, the rule of law, and the procedure established by law on the part of the Government.

The basic political reason that made Chief Minister Naidu a prime PW target is his consistent stand against the extremist party and his refrain that development is not possible as long as the most deadly naxalite party in India is allowed to continue its activities. While Cabinet colleagues have chosen reticence in public as the best policy on this risky issue, he has chosen to be bold and vocal. It must be recalled that Mr. Naidu's former Cabinet colleague, A. Madhava Reddy, who was extremely vocal in denouncing the PW's atrocities, met a gory end when the organisation blasted his vehicle in 2000. The Andhra Pradesh experience and its lessons make it imperative for all States facing hardcore naxalite challenges to take a fresh look at their counter strategies. In addition to tightening security arrangements and improving intelligence as well as law enforcement capabilities, they must examine whether lopsided development policies and also bureaucratic arrogance and insensitivity engender conditions in which extremism thrives.

3 OCT 2003

THE HINDU

People's War spends years planning a major operation

By T Sunil Reddy
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad: Like all ideologically-motivated guerrilla groups, the People's War Group (PWG) spends a few years planning its major operations, such as the one that was meant to kill Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday.

After analysing the previous incidents and the guerrilla group's literature, senior officials engaged in counter-extremist operations are surmising that 'Operation Naidu' was planned meticulously for a very long time before it was executed on the ghat road to Tirumala on Wednesday.

Security experts said that once the PWG's Central Committee (CC) gave the go-ahead for a big operation, special teams were constituted for the job. One or two CC members are given charge and are not required to inform the top leadership about operational details. "It's no wonder then that the PW did not even inform its Chittoor district unit or for that matter the Rayalaseema leadership about the attack against the chief minister," an officer said.

The CC drafts young and talented cadres from different places for the action team. Team members never meet, except on the D-day. Dry runs are conducted at hideouts using explosives against dummy targets. To



Injured Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu with a security guard after they escaped a bid on their lives near Tirupati on Wednesday.

elude the intelligence radar, team members are given specific tasks such as scouting ambush spots, spying target movements, procuring explosives, preparing bombs and planting them at designated locations, and finally setting off the blast. No member of the team knows what the other is tasked with, nor his whereabouts, not even his name.

After several such operations in the past, the police learnt later that the action teams had not even informed the PW central and state committees about the time and venue of the operation. "Operations of Wednesday's magnitude involves a big chain, and the PWG has perfected the art of deinking the chain," a top police official said, pointing out that it is difficult to unearth the whole conspiracy.

Only rarely have the police succeeded in identifying the action teams that carried out sensational operations. The only major success in this respect was when four of the five-member team that killed IPS officer C. Umesh Chandra and ex-home minister A. Madhava Reddy were hunted down and killed by a police crack team in Hyderabad three years ago. Individual action team members were eliminated in separate and chance encounters but not as a group.

that the real reason for Sudhakar's hibernation was to plan a big hit.

Sudhakar was accused of masterminding the killing of then panchayat raj minister A. Madhava Reddy in a landmine blast near Ghatkesar on the outskirts of Hyderabad. Madhava Reddy was in hot pursuit of Naxalites while he was home minister from 1995 to 1999.

Sudhakar was a district-level leader when he was arrested from a PWG hideout in Bangalore. He was jailed for a couple of years but jumped ball after a conditional release. He was first moved to the outfit's south Telangana region, and later made a member of the Andhra state committee.

Meanwhile, a special investigating team is being formed, on the lines of the one constituted to hunt down the killers of Madhava Reddy, to track and eliminate the guerrillas who targeted Mr Naidu on Wednesday.

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad: Even as investigators are grappling to come to terms with Wednesday's attack on Chandrababu Naidu, fingers are being raised on the possible involvement of Patel Sudhakar Reddy, one of the top People's War Group (PWG) operatives. A special police team is being formed to track down and eliminate the guerrillas who targeted Mr Naidu.

Intelligence agencies tracking the extremist movement say Sudhakar Reddy, known by the nom de guerre Suryam in the PWG, has not been seen in the Nallamala forest and the Andhra region, his favourite hiding locales, in the last couple of months. It was initially thought that he might have been shifted to the Dandakaranya belt (Bastar and Gadchiroli) for strategic reasons. But following the Tirumala blast, agencies suspect

Key PWG man's role suspected

Naxalites hit Naidu's car, CM injured

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Tirupati: Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday survived an attempt on his life while driving to the temple town of Tirumala. Police officials suspect the People's War Group of masterminding the attack.

Mr Naidu suffered multiple fractures on the left shoulder and is not in a position to move, doctors at Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences, where he is undergoing treatment, said. The CM was sitting in the front seat of the car.

IT minister B. Gopalakrishna Reddy, Tirupati MLA Ch Krishnamurthy and Puttur MLA R. Rajasekhara Reddy sustained serious injuries in the blast that targeted the chief minister's convoy near the high-security ghat road leading to Tirumala and left his bullet-proof car badly damaged.

Unconfirmed reports said the car driver succumbed to his head injury, while the condition of Mr Reddy remained critical.

The blast occurred at Alipiri, barely 3 km from Tirupati town, at 4.15 p.m. as the chief minister's convoy was proceeding to Tirumala, the abode of Lord Balaji, to make offerings on the occasion of the annual 'Brahmotsavam' festival. Mr Naidu was scheduled to make the customary offerings at 5 p.m.

The blast was apparently triggered from behind the trees near a culvert, police sources said. Under the impact of the blast, one of the cars in the chief minister's convoy was badly damaged and plunged off the road.

"It was a claymore mine blast targeting the chief minister's convoy," director-general of police S.R. Sukumara said.

The blast, which raised

doubts over the efficacy of security measures in the temple town already in a state of high alert after the Akshardham temple attack, came a day after PWG Naxalites abducted two police constables in neighbouring Anantapur district and later killed one of them.

Quoting eyewitnesses, the police said there were twin blasts after the convoy had just crossed the entry gate at the Tirumala foothills and the loud explosion could be heard about two km away.

Shaken by the attack, the Andhra Pradesh government said it was the handiwork of the outlawed People's War Group PWG. "It was a mindless and cowardly act of the Naxalites," state home minister T. Devender Goud told mediapersons.

Six claymore mines were planted near the ghat road and were triggered one after the other, the minister said.

Blast site

Andhra Pradesh
Tirupati

Karnataka
Kolar
Bangalore
Tamil Nadu

- Blast occurred at Alipiri Road at the foothills of Tirumala at 4.10 p.m.
- State minister for infotech B. Gopalakrishna Reddy seriously hurt
- Two other MLAs injured
- Naxalites' hand suspected

DOMESTIC

Probe ordered into MCC strikes

By Our Staff Correspondent

PATNA, JULY 16. The Bihar Government today ordered an inquiry into the damage of railway tracks at four places in the State's northern region by activists of the banned Maoist Communist Centre on Tuesday.

Making a statement during zero hour in the State Assembly, the Panchayat Raj Minister, Up-

endra Prasad Verma, said that the Range IGs of Tirthut and Darbhanga would look into the causes and the role of those involved in the incidents. The two officials would also probe whether the Nepali Maoists were involved in the operations.

Mr. Verma said that the damaged tracks had been repaired and train movements restored. Police today claimed to have ar-

rested Israil alias Md. Firaz for his alleged role in Tuesday incidents were on the lookout for his accomplice, Mistry Nazir. Both of them belonged to Muzaffarpur district, Mr. Verma said.

Accusing the MCC of indulging in anti-people activities, the Government said the outfit had not attacked passenger trains earlier. The Chief Secretary, S.N.

Biswas, today held a high level meeting with the Home Secretary and the regional IGs to chalk out a strategy to check the MCC activities in the northern regions.

The Government officials would coordinate with the railway authorities as also the GRP and the RPF to ensure the safety of passengers and safeguard the tracks.

W.P. 11/12/71
T.P. 11/12/71
g.v. 11/12/71

Naxals gaining foothold in coastal A.P.

By K. Srinivas Reddy

HYDERABAD, MAY 27. The constant revision of strategies by the People's War naxalites and the counter strategies adopted by police in their no-holds-barred confrontation has led to the emergence of a curious situation in Andhra Pradesh.

While the revolutionary movement in north Telangana (NT) area of the State is in the grip of a crisis, the rebels are gaining a foothold in the coastal, north coastal and Rayalaseema districts through a variety of field tactics. Interestingly, the same tactics were put to effective use in NT by the CPI-ML People's War in the late 1980s and the early 1990s.

Select elimination of ruling party leaders and "cruel" policemen, organising famine raids, killing suspected informants and assaults on police patrols took the revolutionary movement in NT to dizzying heights by the mid-1990s.

So much so that the five NT districts declared by the PW as "guerrilla zone" in 1995 was hailed as a role model to inspire "revolutionaries" in not only the other States but also the

Maoist rebels in Nepal, where the revolutionary movement was at a nascent stage.

But successful counter strategies by police obstructed the growth of the movement to such an extent that the PW had to grudgingly accept that the movement had been at an "ebb" since 1998.

Unlike in the late 1980s, a merciless crackdown against the rebels was launched and the police counter-strategy this decade centred around a combination of military offensive and the WHAM strategy (Winning Hearts And Minds) by redressing grievances.

Consequently, the PW continues to get hit with unfailing regularity in NT but the movement is on the upswing in the coastal, north coastal and Rayalaseema regions. How did the PW achieve this? And did the police "fail"?

The PW leadership apparently has stolen a march over the counter strategists of the Government. It is consciously trying to strengthen its base on the fringes of forest areas as it would provide a safe haven for them.

The PW has stepped up its ac-

tivities especially in Guntur, Prakasam, Kurnool, Mahabubnagar, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam, Cuddapah and Anantapur using this strategy.

Police attention is sought to be diverted by increasing the level of violence in non-NT districts.

"To divert the enemy's attention, we should plan actions in Andhra Pradesh and the areas bordering Orissa. More importantly, we should plan political actions against the Telugu Desam and BJP leaders on the scale of North Telangana," a PW document prepared by two of its central committee members in September last shows.

That explains the reason behind the nine out of 20 political murders committed this year by the PW in Guntur (three each of the Congress and the TDP), in Nalgonda (two TDP men) and in Cuddapah (one TDP member). Rest of the 11 murders were committed in Karimnagar (two TDP and one BJP leader), three in Warangal (two TDP leaders and once Congress), two in Nizamabad (one BJP and one TDP leader) and three in Khammam (two TDP and one

political activist of a rival naxal group).

There were also 23 "famine raids" conducted by the PW cadres this year in Kurnool (one looting), Mahabubnagar (7), Cyberabad (2), Nalgonda (3), Prakasam (4), Anantapur (3) and Cuddapah (3).

The famine raids obviously are being taken up to garner public support and to spread the message that the drought relief measures of the Government were not reaching the people. Incidentally, all these raids have taken place in non-NT areas again.

On the other hand, police have dealt a near deathblow to the top PW leadership in the recent times.

Some of the top cadres killed are the Hyderabad district committee secretary, Nomula Ramana Reddy, the State committee member and in-charge of Rayalaseema, Prasad alias Diwakar, the NT special zonal committee members, Padmakka, Anupuram Komuraiah and Polam Sudershan Reddy, the Adilabad DCS, Lalitakka, and the Mahabubnagar DCM, E. Sudhakar alias Seshanna.

28 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

Power to the people, LF-style

PRANAB CHAKRABORTY on the mystery behind the Left Front's coming to power in West Bengal again and again



THE Left Front's uninterrupted stay in power for the past 25 years in West Bengal has raised many a question. Much has been said about the failures and achievements of the government. Its ills have been highlighted by opposing forces across the country. Ever since coming to power, Left leaders have repeatedly expressed the fear of being toppled. But their fear has not turned true, at least till now. On the contrary, they captured power for a record sixth term and, of course, failed to lead the state towards prosperity. The massive support the

Left Front won in 1977 waned gradually. Its failures are now evident in the fields of education, health, industry, employment and of course, building industrial and commercial infrastructures. Yet despite these failures it has succeeded in retaining power for so many years. So, what is the mystery behind the LF coming to power again and again?

Professor Amartya Sen writes in *Development as Freedom*: "While the tigers in the Sunderbans are protected, nothing protects the miserable human beings who try to make a living by working in those woods". With the Left Front's coming to power in 1977 this picture has changed a lot. Here lies the achievement of the LF. It has been able to draw the majority of the oppressed and down-trodden into its camp. It has given them the Panchayat Raj system in 1978 — the platform of the rural poor, who had been denied this by the earlier Congress regimes. The poor and oppressed could now approach CPI-M leaders who initially worked collectively and easily won the people's hearts by their newly acquired zeal to be the masters of the villages.

Before 1978, the Congress leaders — mostly the rural

rich or landlords — had failed to identify with their hopes, and sufferings. On the contrary, a typical feudal atmosphere prevailed in the villages where the poor, didn't have access to justice. They couldn't even think of being involved in politics, leave alone share power. To control the villagers and to maintain supremacy, LF cadres were thus able to

giving them the panchayat system, the LF gave the rural people a platform where village members, mostly from the poor and backward castes, could share their ideas. They could also involve other villagers in the day-to-day village affairs.

rich or landlords — had failed to identify with their hopes, and sufferings. On the contrary, a typical feudal atmosphere prevailed in the villages where the poor, didn't have access to justice. They couldn't even think of being involved in politics, leave alone share power.

Before 1978, the Congress leaders — mostly the rural

ed the state's agricultural output. (The irrigation facilities helped the farmers grow more crops.

But no effort was made to make the village economy viable. The movement to raise the wages brought a large number of landless labourers under the red flag. In this way the LF could bring a sizable section of the rural population under its fold.

But no structural change was visible in the villages, which of course the LF did not want. It just did what suited its purpose — built a solid vote bank to stay in power. Many villages saw electricity for the first time, got tubewells and primary schools (mostly under trees, but these were enough to meet their limited demands). Teachers were recruited from among the LF, mostly CPI-M cadres, or youths with Left leanings. What could have been a glorious example in the field of primary education turned out to be a political gimmick.

On the other hand, the urban people's hope in the Seventies began evaporating gradually. They grew disenchanted with the LF which failed on the education, health, employment and almost all other fronts. Though initially the LF won over workers, teachers and government employees by increasing their salaries, they failed to live up to the middle-class's expectations.

On the other hand, the urban people's hope in the Seventies began evaporating gradually. They grew disenchanted with the LF which failed on the education, health, employment and almost all other fronts. Though initially the LF won over workers, teachers and government employees by increasing their salaries, they failed to live up to the middle-class's expectations.

But the newly formed middle-class owed its allegiance to the LF in the absence of a meaningful alternative. Unorganised sectors like those of hawkers, building workers, tree plantation workers, and others too helped create the LF vote bank.

But by the Nineties, the problems were there for even a Nelson to see. The state's coffers were almost empty. The dream of an alternative economy had come crashing down. Employees were not sure of getting their pay. Unemployment had risen sharply. Stagnation and downside were used to describe the state of West Bengal.

What matters worse for the people was the absence of a viable opposition. That came as a boon to the LF, for it could survive even if it didn't perform. That it has been alienated from the people, especially the poor, to a large extent is there for all of us to see.

The result is the presence of the People's War, a Naxalite outfit in the poor areas. The outfit is getting support and sympathy of the hapless people. FW's presence, though of little importance now, may be the distant thunder for a greater political struggle to destroy the political stability achieved by a strong hierarchical party organisation.

(The author is a freelance contributor.)

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PAR SCORE 120-130
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in The Official Scrabble Players Dictionary (Merriam-Webster) and OSW Official Scrabble Words (Chambers). JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

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PAR SCORE 85-75
JUDD'S TOTAL

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDD
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RACK 1 = 68
RACK 2 = 10
RACK 3 = 12
RACK 4 = 15

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Left groups protest against war

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MARCH 21. Leftist organisations in the capital today protested against the American-led war on Iraq and urged the Indian Government to strengthen its stand on the issue.

Activists of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI-ML) New Democracy staged a protest outside the American Center. After displaying placards and raising slogans in support of the Iraqi people, they set an effigy of the U.S. President, George W. Bush, on fire. Four activists — Aparna (secretary, CPI-ML New Democracy), Vikas (general secretary, Delhi IFTU), Animesh (member, Delhi IFTU) and Mri-gank (president, NBS) — called upon Indians to protest against the war by demonstrations, burning the American flag and boycotting American and British goods. The protesters were detained by the police.

The CPI-ML (New Democra-

cy) has urged the Indian Government to demand the convening of the U.N. General Assembly and the declaration of Mr. Bush and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, as war criminals. It has also asked that the Indian Parliament be convened immediately to pass a resolution condemning war and extend all help to Iraqi citizens.

The Delhi committee of the party will burn effigies of Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair and the American flag in various industrial centres of Delhi in the coming week.

The Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) also expressed its "strong opposition" to the war, stating that it would lead to the loss of innocent lives and the destruction of Iraq. It condemned Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair for attacking Iraq despite opposition from the majority of members of the U.N. Security Council and statements on Iraqi cooperation by the U.N. Chief Weapons Inspector.

The DYFI has criticised the

Indian Government for "refusing to take a firm and categorical position" against U.S. war effort, and demanded that a clear statement be issued on the same.

The Federation will organise protest marches and demonstrations throughout the country and in front of the U.S. embassy here.

'Detrimental to economy'

Scores of supporters belonging to the CPI-ML (Liberation) assembled at Parliament Street condemning the US-led war.

Denouncing it as a "blatant war of aggression and held the Bush-Blair bandwagon as the biggest threat to peace and civilisation", the protesters displayed banners, placards and chanting slogans against the war.

Addressing the anti-war activists, the party general secretary, Dipankar Bhattacharya, said the war on Iraq was a "di-

rect onslaught on the whole of Asia and the Third World. Present war is singularly detrimental to India's own economic and strategic interests, yet the pro-U.S. Vajpayee Government has refused to oppose the war".

He said the present war was singularly detrimental to India's economic and strategic interests, yet the pro-U.S. Vajpayee Government had refused to oppose the war. The party activists would also join the march to U.S. embassy tomorrow being organised under the banner of 'Committee against war on Iraq'.

Another demonstration was held by the Lok Janshakti's minority cell. Its chief, Syed Afzal Abbas, said the manner in which Mr. Bush ignored the world opinion and the U.N. "shows the arrogance of the head of a superpower and non-understanding by a leader of a democracy which takes pride in liberty, fraternity and dignity of human being".

Comrades in arms

SC 2

2/13

9/10/03

King Gyanendra of Nepal visits India today and is expected to discuss ways to contain the Maoists in his country. NALIN VERMA analyses the reasons why they have found ready supporters among the Naxalites

"There's now enough evidence to say MCC and PW operating in Bihar and Jharkhand are extending all sorts of support to their Nepalese counterparts," said a senior police officer, when the Indian government is providing military hardware and training to Nepal's army to help it fight the Maoists.

"Yes, we're giving military hardware and training to Nepal's army to equip it counter the insurgency," defence minister George Fernandes said recently. "India is committed to helping Nepal root out insurgency."

King Gyanendra will be in new Delhi on 20 March on a two-day diplomatic visit during which he's expected to meet President APJ Abdul Kalam, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and some senior ministers. The visit comes before the Nepal government is scheduled to begin talks with the Maoists, who have called a temporary truce now. Needless to say, the king would expect more cooperation from India in fighting the Maoists of his country.

But has the Indian government been able to contain the rise of ultra-Left politics in its own states? Senior MCC leader Vijn Kumar Arya told this correspondent that his outfit and PW are extending all cooperation to the revolutionaries in Nepal to replace the monarchy by people's power." He said: "The goal of Indian revolutionaries and their Nepal counterparts is common. Both of us are fighting a revolutionary battle to end the repressive



The mother of one of the 17 other cable people massacred in a Bihar village in October 2000. Such killings have become common in the state of Laloo Yadav and Babu Devi and forced people to join or support ultra-Left groups. — AP

rule based on the pillage of a Hindu *razdara* and replace it by the rule of the people. And people's power comes out of the barrel of the gun... as simple as that."

People's War (which the CPI-M, Farid Unity and Andhra Pradesh's PW merged to form its Bihar) and MCC are on a merger course which may be effected by November. MCC and PW leaders held their first joint congress in a Jharkhand jungle in December 2001 and decided to "cooperate" with the Maoist movement in Nepal, the "war of liberation" in Jammu and Kashmir and the NSCN (IM) led separatist movement in Nagaland.

But MCC and PW are concentrating more on the Nepalese Maoist, especially because the Himalayan kingdom shares a 745-km porous border with India. Several north Bihar districts including Kishanganj, Araria, Madhepura, East and West Champaran, Madhubani

and Siemethi share a border with Nepal. The reason for the "close cooperation" between ultra-Left groups in Bihar and Jharkhand and Nepal is the easy movement of extremists, illegal arms and contrabands from both sides of the border and the parallel administration run by the Naxalites in large parts of Bihar and Jharkhand.

Moreover, the Naxalites, particularly MCC and PW which earlier were active in central and south Bihar (now Jharkhand)

have now expanded their operations to north Bihar districts. According to Nepal Intelligence reports show that East and West Champaran, Madhepura, Darbhanga, Madhubani, Samastipur and Patna are now areas where MCC and PW have become active since the past two years. Almost 80 per cent of the people in these north Bihar districts depend on agriculture and most of them are exploited by the ruling and landed class — a fertile ground for Naxalites to indoctrinate the masses. What has made the Naxalites task easier is that 60 per cent of the people here are from the Backward Classes or Scheduled Caste, 80-90 per cent of who own less than five acres of land each.

The region has a history of a strong peasant movement. After Naxalbari in north Bengal, Westward in north Bihar's Muzaffargar district was the most viable region during the height of the Naxalite movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was from here that the Naxalite philosophy spread to other parts of Bihar. But Jaiprakash Narayan's and Karpoori Thakur's movement in the mid-1970s, in which many BK's and STs participated, thwarted the growth of Naxalism in north Bihar. The rise of Laloo Prasad Yadav was a circum came true for many a BK. But the Lalu-Rahm regime has hardly brought about any fundamental change in the material condition of the Dalits and BKs. Few Laloo Yadav has not yet implemented his promised land reforms which could have bettered the condition of the downtrodden. Instead of keeping his promise, Laloo Yadav used the permission and combination of castes to stay in power, thus increasing the frustration of the landless Backward Classes and the Dalit population.

Barred ultra-Left outfits such as MCC and PW have been using the failures of the ruling parties to drive people to their fold. And they have succeeded in a big way, for this region borders Nepal where too people live in poverty and deprivation under a "repressive" system. "We don't differentiate between the people of Nepal and those of India for they are suffering at the hands of the same exploitative regime," said Sampath, PW central committee member. Expelling Nepal from the "satrapy of monarchy" and establishing the rule of the proletariat is the "first goal of the revolutionaries."

The Special Service Bureau has deployed six battalions along the Indo-Nepal border to prevent arms and ammunitions and extremists from slipping across into either country. Each battalion comprises 1,100 soldiers. But their number is hardly enough to man the long border, an SSB senior officer said. Moreover, police have their limitation in dealing with such problems. For they demand a bigger political and economic intervention to be solved.

(The author is Bihar-based Special Representative of The Statesman.)

0 MAR 2003

THE STATESMAN

20 MAR 2003

Naxalite blow to Jharkhand tourism

Sandeep Sarkar in Ranchi

Feb. 10. — Betla forests, Hazaribagh National Park and Netarhat in Jharkhand were once considered popular tourist spots.

Thanks to the Naxalites, the tourism sector in Jharkhand is now going through some very tough times. According to official figures, three lakh tourists, including 1,000 foreign nationals visited Jharkhand in the year 2002 as against 4.80 lakh including 3,000 foreign tourists in 2001.

According to a police officer, the once-popular tourist spots are now avoided by holidayers as most areas are under the grip of the Naxalites. "I had heard a lot about the Saranda forests and wanted to

visit them with my family, but now I have changed my mind after the killing of policemen there some time ago", said Mrs Manjula Bagchi, a resident of Kolkata.

The dense Saranda forests, considered to be the king of Sal trees, was free from Naxalite influence when Jharkhand was formed, but now things have changed as a result of which the locals who were dependant on the tourist for their daily bread are bereft of their income.

Other spots such as the Betla Forest Falls and Netarhat have also witnessed a decline in the number of tourists since they fall in the sensitive Palamau district, considered to be the hub of Naxalite movement. The Hazaribagh National park, visited by lakhs of tourist each year, is experiencing a

similar crisis.

Ranchi, the capital, on whose outskirts the spots are located, has a similar story to tell. Even residents of Ranchi are now afraid to visit these spots. "Three years ago,



we could visit Dasham, Hundru and Jonha Falls but now we cannot do so", said Mr Puneet Mishra, a businessman. "Hence we either visit other states or else remain at home during the childre-

n's vacation", he rued.

Admitting that the Naxalites have thrown a major hurdle at them, tourism department officials are hopeful that tourist flow would return back to normalcy. Tourism director Mr Sanjay Kumar Jha only few tourist spots have been affected. The incident at Saranda forests where 18 policemen were killed took place miles away from the tourist spot, he said.

Mr Jha said that the spots of Betla forests and Netarhat are not directly affected by Naxalite activities. He said other spots such as Deyghar and Rajrappa temple are still visited by tourists from other states. "Only a part of Western Jharkhand is affected whereas the hub of tourist activity takes place

in Northern Jharkhand", he said. "The tourism department on its part is trying its best counter the problem by involving locals in its activities since the locals are heavily influenced by the Naxalite groups. We have decided to form co-operatives in the affected areas so that locals can earn a decent income", said Mr Jha.

He said that the tourism department has entrusted the India Tourism Development Corporation to carry out eight projects around Ranchi which will help promote the sector. "The cost of the project will be around Rs 10.5 crore and will be carried out at Dasham, Hundru and Jonha falls, Jagannathpur temple, Ranchi and Tagore hills and Hatia and Kanke dam respectively, he said.

Red terror

By K. Srinivas Reddy

HD-10
4/2

THE RUMBLE of Spring Thunder refuses to die down in India. It can be heard loud and clear in many States hitherto believed to be insulated from the influence of those who advocate a protracted armed struggle to achieve the New Democratic Revolution to end all social ills.

Some two decades ago, Andhra Pradesh was left to grapple with the problem all by itself while the other States shrugged it off, attributing the spread of 'red terror' to the inefficiency of the police and the inability of the civil administration to solve basic issues confronting the people. Left-wing extremism was construed to be an aberration in the democratic polity, which Andhra Pradesh had to tackle on its own. Central assistance was confined to financial help to modernise the police force though every politician knew that the seeds of the problem lay elsewhere.

This typical Government response — reactive rather than proactive in seizing the initiative — has led to the present scenario where more than 10 States have suddenly become alive to the dangers posed by naxalites. At a recent meeting of Chief Secretaries and Directors-General of Police in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh too acknowledged that left-wing extremism had struck deep roots and that there was an urgent need to initiate steps to tackle it.

If Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are the worst hit, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa are not much better off. These Governments are disinclined to accept that it is not merely a movement where a revolutionary party organises people to protest the official machinery's inefficiency. They refuse to accept that it has become guerrilla warfare where small bands of committed and armed people are poised to take on the might of the Governments.

Left-wing extremism is no more confined to Andhra Pradesh and a few pockets bordering it. The spread of the Red Corridor is slow but steady. From Dandakaranya, the contiguous forest tracts in Maharashtra,

Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, the movement has taken root in Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, the plains of Orissa and West Bengal. If intelligence inputs are to be believed, the movement is in its nascent stages in Kerala, Punjab, Delhi and Haryana too. While these States have not witnessed any violence so far, this could just be a matter of time. The rapid spread of the Maoist

g.P.P.
CP/M

ernments have always been reactive to problems. By seizing the initiative, parties such as the PW have been successful to a large extent while the Governments continue to make the same mistake — danger is not recognised in time and the revolutionary movement is allowed to grow. Some reforms are introduced hurriedly and a publicity blitzkrieg unleashed.

Little do the Governments realise that the so-called reforms — after

that the extremists got a sufficient number of people to back them in isolated and inaccessible areas where Government authority is weak. Initially, guerrilla operations such as the ambushing of police patrol teams or targeted killing of elected representatives are taken up. The extremists use the one-two punch of intimidation and persuasion and the local populace invariably finds it expedient to cooperate and remain silent.

This is where the Governments usually face a dilemma. Intimidation through sheer repression would mean losing the people's support and if no such repression is unleashed, people tend to bow to the extremists. The sudden upswing in militancy in Chhattisgarh or coastal Andhra or even in areas on the Andhra-Orissa border bears testimony to this great dilemma. The Governments appear to be cooperating with the extremists by underestimating the threat perception. And all too often, Governments actions are counter-productive. For example, the so-called 'encounter killings'.

As attacks and counter-attacks continue, the concept of area domination creeps in where large contingents of police are dumped in affected areas, but their success would be limited since most of the supporters of extremists would have either gone underground or simply melted away.

To some extent, the Andhra Pradesh Government succeeded in involving the civil administration in the process of development. And coupled with a clear offensive launched by the police, it was able to check the PW activity somewhat in Telangana, but it failed to anticipate the strategic move of the PW to shift its focus to other areas where again the cycle has begun all over again.

Will this be a lesson to other States? Or will they have to go through the same cycle once again? Or using Andhra Pradesh's experiences, will they address the core issues of the people instead of only focussing on launching brutal crackdowns?

Left-wing extremism is no more confined to Andhra Pradesh and a few pockets bordering it. The spread of the Red Corridor is slow but steady.

influence in neighbouring Nepal is another matter of concern since the CPI(M) People's War (PW), the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) are known to support each other. In fact, a border committee comprising representatives of these three parties is said to have been formed. Within the country, the PW and the MCC have undertaken to form a United Front, which could see the emergence of the long-dreamt-of Red Corridor from Nepal to Dandakaranya.

But how does the extreme Left movement spread, especially given the 'development' all around? The Governments would reel out reams of statistics on the 'developmental works' being taken up either by the States directly or with Central assistance. There is no cause for concern, they would say, since people continue to repose belief in democratic governance. After all, haven't they been participating in all the elections?

However, a closer look would show that people who may not be so vociferous in their demands for just governance would certainly back, albeit silently, any alternative system where grievances can be redressed effectively. That would perhaps explain the continued support of a small percentage of people for the advocates of armed struggle. Gov-

problems arise — are not only ineffective, the revolutionaries too by then have strengthened their position so much that they can even thwart whatever little efforts are put in. And then comes the stage of finding a solution. But since the Government is almost always reacting to what the revolutionary does, it is always one step behind.

Obviously, the main problem is the lack of a well-defined strategy involving the police and the civil administration. The Governments continue to entrust the job of tackling the revolutionary to the police when an effective counter-strategy would be to galvanise the civil administration into achieving some tangible results, some visible development.

Be it in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh or West Bengal, the PW has succeeded in magnifying and exploiting the cracks in the social and administrative structures to the extent possible. Problems of the landless poor, apathy of the Government agencies, cumbersome administrative procedures, the inability of the administration to act fast — everything is exploited by the revolutionary parties and when combined with the tactical use of terror, success is inevitable.

If Andhra Pradesh is taken as an example to analyse the spread of the revolutionary movement, it is clear

Trinamul councillors to oppose water tax

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, Feb. 1. — Following Miss Mamata Banerjee's instructions, messages are being sent to Trinamul Congress councillors of all municipalities and corporations of the state to oppose the state government's decision to levy water tax.

This was decided at an informal meeting between Miss Banerjee and party leaders. Miss Banerjee said fresh taxes on water amounted to playing with people's lives. "The Left Front government has lost the

moral sanction to rule," she said. With this, she sent a discreet message to Mr Subrata Mukherjee, mayor, that any move of his to support the state government's water tax proposal would not be tolerated by the party. Incidentally, the mayor hasn't quite clearly stated whether the KMC would implement the state government's decision.

The state has chosen the easy way of mobilising revenue by slapping taxes, Miss Banerjee said. "After having failed to generate resources

and cut down non-Plan expenditure over the years, the Marxists have now taken resort to the option of burdening the public. We won't allow this to happen," she thundered.

The Trinamul chief said her party would go in for a massive agitation across the state to thwart the government's move. The state BJP leadership, which is also opposing the water tax proposal, has decided to organise a law-violation programme in this regard at Esplanade on 14 February.