

Title: The Minister of Home Affairs made a statement regarding naxal attack on police force in Bijapur Police District in Dantewada district in Chhattisgarh in the early hours of 15th March, 2007.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): Madam, with a deep sense of anguish and sadness, I rise to inform the House of a tragic incident which occurred in the early hours of 15th March, 2007 near Bijapur in Chhattisgarh.

During the intervening night between 14th/15th March, 2007 2-3 A.M., a group of naxalite attacked a police force camping in a vacant Ashram school building in Rani Bodli village in Bijapur district. As per the reports received, at the time of this attack, there were about 70 personnel of the State Armed Police and Special Police Officers (SPOs) appointed by the Chhattisgarh Government camping here. In this attack, 16 police personnel of State Armed Police and 39 SPOs have been reportedly killed and 12 police personnel were injured. The injured have been taken to a nearby hospital. 39 Police weapons have been looted by the naxalites. Chhattisgarh Police have also reported that about 10-12 naxalites were also killed in the incident.

The senior police officers of the State Government have reached the spot and are supervising the relief and search operations. The State Home Minister along with the DGP is also visiting the site of the attack. Search operations are continuing keeping in view the possibility of the surrounding area being mined by naxalites.

The Central Government has been regularly reviewing the naxalite situation in Chhattisgarh. 13 battalions of Central Para-Military Forces have been deployed in the State to supplement the efforts of the State Police Force to control naxal violence. 4 India Reserve Battalions have also been sanctioned to the State and while 2 such battalions have been raised by the State, the other 2 are under raising. UAVs have also been made available to the State Government. This is the only State to which these have been given. 17 armoured vehicles have been given to the State to neutralize threats posed by IED land-mine blasts used by naxalites against the security forces and civilians. Additional funds of Rs.25 crores are also being given to the State Government under the police modernization scheme primarily for helping the State police to set up demining units with latest equipments. This is in addition to normal funds given to the State every year under the police modernization and security related expenditure (SRE) schemes. In addition, three expert teams from the CPMFs for detection and disposal of explosives have also been provided. Need-based helicopter facility for evacuation of casualties and movement of police personnel has also been given to the State Government. A helicopter has been sent from Delhi to assist the State Government in rescue operations.

The Ministry is in regular touch with the State Government and is keeping a close watch on the situation. The Central Government has promised the State Government any further help if required. The Government views the naxalite menace as an area of serious concern and remains fully determined to combat the challenge posed by it in association with the State Governments.

Madam, I was asked to make statements on two incidents; one on incident in Chhattisgarh and the other on incident in Nandigram. In Rajya Sabha, I could make a statement on the incident in Nandigram, but I could not make a statement on the incident in Chhattisgarh. That is why, I have made this statement here. If necessary and if there is a demand, I have statement on the incident in Nandigram also, I can lay it on the Table of the House.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (BALASORE): Madam, he had stated that on the basis of a telephonic message, he made some statement. I would like that the hon. Minister makes a statement today here also.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Madam, if allowed, I can do that.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : All right.
