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Title: Regarding abduction of the District Magistrate of Malkangiri, Orissa by the Maoists.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I stand here to raise a very sensitive issue and I would like to draw the attention of the Members who are present here including the Ministers of the Government. The matter relates to the abduction of the District Magistrate of Malkangiri. His future is still in suspense. Till last night, the message was that all of them have been released. But ultimately it is the Junior Engineer who arrived with another two demands that unless these two demands are met within 48 hours, then the District Magistrate has to meet eventualities. The kidnapping of a District Magistrate in Orissa shows the hollow claims of development. This is a point which, I think, all of us, cutting across party lines, should try to understand, to deliberate and come to a conclusion.

Always we have been discussing inside this House and also outside that the only antithesis to terrorism, to insurgency, to violence is development. Here, always, we have said, it is development *versus* law and order debate. The officer, Mr. R Veenil Krishna, is a civil servant with a conscience. He was an engineer from IIT Madras. His wife is also an engineer. Both of them could have led a very fruitful life in the United States. But they opted to come and serve the tribals of our country. When he was posted in Orissa, he deliberately wanted to serve in the tribal-dominated areas especially the Left Wing extremist infested areas. He was posted in a Block as a Sub-Collector, which is adjacent to Jharkhand. After completion of his tenure there for three years, he again opted that he should go to the other extreme in the Southern part in the Dandakaranya area in the Malkangiri district where he is still serving for more than 1 ½ years.

My point here is this. His work with the poor and the under-privileged has led to those who he served, protesting against his abduction by the Maoists. I think, four or five days back, a news item must have been read by many hon. Members here that a large number of tribals have come out to the streets, have gone into the jungles in search of the District Magistrate. It is not only in that district alone, a large number of people, students, college students, school students have come out in different parts of the State. This type of public upsurge has come out because people know what type of an officer he is. It is not an individual alone; there are a large number of people who are also doing this type of work of serving the poor. Here the debate is this. At one point, are you going to make it a law and order problem and deal with them or through development? If here is a pro-development officer who is going fearlessly and working for the people there, he gets abducted, how are you going to tackle that situation?

The Maoists had set the terms. They selected the interlocutors, and accordingly the discussion started. They had listed first two demands. Subsequently six demands were added; subsequently another six were added. Within 48 hours, all the 14 demands were met. Many of them, of course, were related to the Centre taking a decision. For instance, there is one Konda-Dora tribe. More than two or three years back, that suggestion had come from the State Government to be notified here, to be considered by the Home Ministry.

I had raised it here last year, 2010 in this House that these were the tribes which need notification by the Central Government. It is still pending. Why should we wake up by a situation like this? My point here is that these are calculated moves in a strategy using pro-people officers as 'pawns' and the deadly game is to defeat the idea of development.

What has happened? I do not know whether many of you are aware about the logistic, the situation there. There is a big reservoir. Some years back, I think, two years back, another tragedy had occurred when a motorboat was blown up and attacked by Maoists, and people belonging to Greyhound from Andhra Pradesh were killed. That is a reservoir which has a large number of Islands in between, inside the reservoir. The only way is that you have to take a motorboat from the last point of the road and once you reach those Islands, you travel by a motorcycle. That is what this Collector was doing. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You come to the point.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : I will curtail it. I will sum it up. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him complete.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : It is not for the first time that this District Magistrate has been there. The Central Government, the Home Minister directly contacts the District Magistrate of, I think, 60 Districts which have been identified as 'Leftwing extremist-affected' Districts. The Home Minister contacts them directly. Funds are provided to the District Magistrates directly to do individual beneficiary schemes to be implemented in those areas, where a tube well is required; where a little

bit of concrete road is required; and where individual benefit scheme like the old age pension is to be given. All other types of works are directly done by the Collector or by the District Magistrates. That is what he was doing. That is why, people had tremendous affection for this Collector and other Collectors who are doing this type of work. So, he had been to that place to find out how an irrigation project was benefiting the people. That is how, the Junior Engineers were also with him.

Here, I would only say that on the day of abduction, he visited a single-window camp. Mr. Krishna had visited that area a number of times. The tribals have out openly. The requirement here is this. In this inaccessible area, what we call in Orissa as 'cut-off area', there is a need to build a bridge across the reservoir. That is why, I think, the Central Government can come out in a bigger way, and once that bridge is constructed there, then inaccessibility to that cut-off area will end, and people can be identified with the main land people.

The last point which I would like to say is this. The Home Minister directly interacts with the District Magistrates to do development works; this is a challenge for us. Do we need any other mechanism to fight with this type of violence? I would leave it to this House and to the Party which is in power here to think about other mechanisms in place before us to fight this type of violence.

With these words, I conclude.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal is associating with the issue raised by Shri B. Mahtab.

Shri Ramashankar Rajbhar.