

# “We are Ready to Talk to the Government”

## [Interview with Koteswar Rao (Kishanji)]

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*Koteswar Rao, alias Kishanji, is undoubtedly the backbone of the movement in Lalgarh. Number two in the CPI(Maoist) politburo, the 51-year old landmine expert trained by the LTTE tells Snigdhendru Bhattacharya that the Maoists are ready to talk to the government to resolve the Lalgarh crisis.*

### **Is the CPI(Maoist) ready to talk to the government?**

We have no problems with solving the crisis through talks but for that the state and Central governments will first have to withdraw the force from areas where there is a boycott against the police. It is not possible for the agitating tribals to sit for talks when gun-toting police and paramilitary forces are raiding the area.

### **Have you send a proposal to the state government, as indicated by the West Bengal home secretary Ardhendu Sen on Friday?**

No, we haven't. But we are not rigid — we will not hold on to our demand that the state must apologise. We also want to avoid bloodshed.

### **Any other conditions?**

The talks can only be held at Dalilpur chowk [a stronghold of the tribals/Maoists], in the presence of local tribals who have been subjected to police atrocities.

### **What about the statement by the Union home minister P. Chidambaram that the Centre favoured banning the CPI(Maoist)?**

Nothing more is expected from a stooge of the World Bank. The government has initiated an attack on the tribal population and there must be a reply.

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