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Armed Maoists Swarm CPI(M) Party Office

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A bloody battle between armed CPI(M) supporters and Maoists in West Bengal on Monday (September 21) had left 15 people dead. The clash took place outside the CPI(M) party office in a town called Enayetpur, 15km from Midnapore near Lalgah and a three-hour drive from Kolkata. Police said the final casualty figure is yet to be ascertained. According to top police officials, over 500 rounds were fired in the gunbattle.

The Maoists claim they have gunned down at least 12 CPI(M) supporters. Sources say the Maoists were trying to take over the CPI(M) party office where it's rumoured to contain a large stockpile of arms to be used against the Maoists.

No security personnel could reach the area, despite the gunbattle raging for several hours on the road between Midnapore and Dherua, in the heart of Lalgah, an area that was for long out of bounds for police. Gunshots could be heard until 10pm, more than five hours after the fighting erupted.

The Maoist gunmen are reportedly led by two powerful commanders named Kishanji or Koteswar Rao and Bikash.

According to sources, about 200 CPI(M) supporters had assembled at the Enayetpur party office over the last three weeks, apparently to stop the Maoist advance towards Midnapore town. Many of them had also taken shelter there, with the Maoists killing CPI(M) men almost every day. On Monday, most left to celebrate Eid. Only 50-odd CPI(M) cadres held fort at the party office.

In the afternoon, a 10,000-strong group of tribals, many of them carrying firearms, started marching towards the office, led by Kishanji and Bikash. At 5pm, the Maoist assault party started surrounding the building.

Earlier, Maoists had threatened finance minister Pranab Mukherjee with dire consequences, the threat made public through leaflets found strewn in the Press Room of Berhampore in Murshidabad District in West Bengal.

The leaflet also mentions that an IED blast which took place on the NH 34 on August 30th, in which one naxalite was killed was intended for Pranab Mukherjee.

Meanwhile, a top leader of Communist Party of India (Maoist), who is in charge of spreading the organisation's influence in urban areas, was arrested in New Delhi on Monday (September 21), police sources said. Kobad Gandhi, a CPI (Maoist) Politbureau member, was apprehended by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police last night following an input received from intelligence agencies, they said. Police sources, however, refused to divulge from where he was arrested.

[http://www.timesnow.tv/Armed-Maoist-swarm-CPI\(M\)-party-office/articleshow/4327889.cms](http://www.timesnow.tv/Armed-Maoist-swarm-CPI(M)-party-office/articleshow/4327889.cms)