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Maoists release abducted cop as WB court frees 14 tribal women

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KOLKATA: A West Bengal court on Thursday released 14 tribal women, which was one of the conditions laid down by the Maoists for the release of abducted police officer Atindra Nath Dutta. Media reports suggest the abducted cop has been released.

According to sources, the West Midnapore district court has released 14 tribal women who were earlier arrested by the police for allegedly having links with the Maoists ultras in Lalgarh region.

"We'll release Dutta in good condition shortly. We'll release him within next one hour (around 4 p.m.) and send him back in a car," Maoist leader Kishenji alias Koteswar Rao had earlier told a Bengali television channel here.

"I've kept my word which I'd given to the people and the family members of Dutta."

Earlier, Kishenji threatened to kill Dutta who was abducted by the Leftwing ultras during an attack on Sankrail police station in the district earlier this week.

"The Maoists won't take the responsibility if anything happens to the abducted police officer. Earlier, I had assured that we would take care of him (Dutta) and will release him if our demands are met," he told media here this (Thursday) morning.

Kishenji said: "I can't take the responsibility as the joint forces have opened fire at our men and have surrounded the entire area.

"The joint forces must move back. If they don't stop firing I won't be able to keep my word. The consequence would be disastrous if the joint forces do not stop its operation," he said.

Ashok Dutta, father of the abducted cop, said: "I am very happy to hear the news (of his son's imminent release). I thank everyone for this.

"But so far I have not received any information from the state government."

Ashok Dutta had earlier raised a question about the necessity of the joint operation in the Maoist areas at such a crucial time.

According to police sources, a contingent of joint forces opened fire at the Maoist rebels near Purnatani area Thursday morning.

The abducted policeman spoke to a Bengali TV channel, late Wednesday night. "I am fine. I am completely fit also. They (Maoists) have not tortured me," he said.

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