



## CRPF, CoBRA sit idle as Orissa fights Maoists

**Debabrata Mohanty**

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**Bhubaneswar** : Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik may be asking the Centre for more paramilitary forces to combat the Maoists but differences have started surfacing between the central forces already stationed in the state and the state police over utilisation of the personnel. On his return from Delhi last week, Patnaik said: "I had asked the Union Home Ministry for seven more battalions (nearly 7,000 personnel) of paramilitary forces. But that has not been forthcoming." A senior CRPF official associated with anti-Maoist operations, however, said the central paramilitary force had been urging the state police to utilise the three battalions of CRPF and one Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) stationed in the southern districts of Malkangiri and Koraput. "We are telling them repeatedly to use our forces. These people (CRPF) as well as CoBRA are just spending time watching TV in the absence of real action," said the CRPF officer, requesting anonymity.

A senior officer of the Orissa Police associated with anti-Maoist operations countered the CRPF allegations, saying the CRPF forces were of little use. "These people (CRPF) throw a thousand tantrums before any operations and recuse themselves over silly reasons. They are good for nothing. Till date, CoBRA officers have not done any operation and are happy sitting in their camps. What we need are officers from the Border Security Force who have experience in jungle warfare," he said.

Another CRPF official said no anti-Naxal offensive was being carried out by the police in the most-affected Malkangiri and Koraput districts. "More than 95 per cent area of Malkangiri and 75 per cent area of Koraput are beyond the state's control," he said.

Orissa Inspector General of Police (Operations) Sanjib Marik said despite not getting the promised seven battalions of CRPF from the Centre, the state was doing well in anti-Naxal operations, particularly in Sundargarh and Raygada districts. "We have the capacity to take on the Maoists alone," he said.

A DIG of Orissa Police said four officers from BSF and CRPF in the rank of deputy commandant had been deployed in the Naxal-hit districts of Raygada, Koraput, Malkangiri and Rourkela as additional SPs (operation).

“These people would be of real help as they can train the cops and lead operations. They would give us a boost,” he said.